CASS SERIES ON SOVIET (RUSSIAN) STUDY OF WAR
Series Editor: David M.Glantz

THE BATTLE FOR THE UKRAINE

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

CASS SERIES ON THE SOVIET (RUSSIAN) STUDY OF WAR

Series Editor: David M.Glantz

ISSN: 1462–0960

This series examines what Soviet military theorists and commanders learned from the study of their own military operations.

1. Harold S.Orenstein, translator and editor, *Soviet Documents on the Use of War Experience,* Volume I, *The Initial Period of War 1941,* with an Introduction by David M.Glantz (ISBN 0 7146 3392 5 cloth)

2. Harold S.Orenstein, translator and editor, *Soviet Documents on the Use of War Experience,* Volume II, *The Winter Campaign 1941–1942,* with an Introduction by David M.Glantz (ISBN 0 7146 3393 3 cloth)

3. Joseph G.Welsh, translator, *Red Armor Combat Orders: Combat Regulations for Tank and Mechanized Forces 1944,* edited and with an Introduction by Richard N.Armstrong (ISBN 0 7146 3401 8 cloth)

4. Harold S.Orenstein, translator and editor, *Soviet Documents on the Use of War Experience,* Volume III, *Military Operations 1941 and 1942,* with an Introduction by David M.Glantz (ISBN 0 7146 3402 6 cloth)

5. William A.Burhans, translator, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies* by V.K. Triandafillov, edited by Jacob W.Kipp, with an Introduction by James J.Schneider (ISBN 0 7146 4501 X cloth, 0 7146 4118 9 paper)

6. Harold S.Orenstein, translator, *The Evolution of Soviet Operational Art, 1927–1991: The Documentary Basis,* Volume I, *Operational Art, 1927–1964,* with an Introduction by David M. Glantz (ISBN 0 7146 4547 8 cloth, 0 7146 4228 2 paper)

7. Harold S.Orenstein, translator, *The Evolution of Soviet Operational Art, 1927–1991: The Documentary Basis,* Volume II, *Operational Art, 1965–1991,* with an Introduction by David M.Glantz (ISBN 0 7146 4548 6 cloth, 0 7146 4229 0 paper)

8. Richard N.Armstrong and Joseph G.Welsh, *Winter Warfare: Red Army Orders and Experiences* (ISBN 0 7146 4699 7 cloth, 0 7146 4237 1 paper)

9. Lester W.Grau, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (ISBN 0 7146 4874 4 cloth, 0 7146 4413 7 paper)

10. David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein, editor and translator, *The Battle for Kursk 1943: The Soviet General Staff Study* (ISBN 0 7146 4933 3 cloth, 0 7146 4493 5 paper)

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

11. Niklas Zetterling and Anders Frankson, *Kursk 1943: A Statistical Analysis* (ISBN 0 7146 5052 8 cloth, 0 7146 8103 2 paper)

12. David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein, editor and translator, *Belorussia 1944: The Soviet General Staff Study* (ISBN 0 7146 5102 8 cloth)

13. David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein, editor and translator, *The Battle for L'vov, July 1944: The Soviet General Staff Study* (ISBN 0 7146 5201 6 cloth)

14. Alexander O.Chubaryan and Harold Shukman, editors, *Stalin and the Soviet-Finnish War, 1939–40* (ISBN 0 7146 5203 2 cloth)

15. David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein, editor and translator, *The Battle for the Ukraine: The Red Army's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation, 1944* (ISBN 0 7146 5278 4)

16. David M.Glantz, *The Soviet Strategic Offensive in Manchuria, 1945: August Storm'* (ISBN 0 7146 5279 2)

17. David M.Glantz, *Soviet Operational and Tactical Combat in Manchuria, 1945: August Storm'* (ISBN 0 7146 5300 4)

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

THE BATTLE FOR THE UKRAINE

The Red Army's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation, 1944 (The Soviet General Staff Study)

Translated and edited by

DAVID M.GLANTZ
and
HAROLD S.ORENSTEIN

FRANK CASS
LONDON • PORTLAND, OR

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

First published in 2003 in Great Britain by

FRANK CASS PUBLISHERS
Crown House, 47 Chase Side
London N14 5BP

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

"To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk."

and in the United States of America by

FRANK CASS PUBLISHERS
c/o ISBS, 920 NE 58th Avenue, Suite 300
Portland, Oregon, 97213–3786

Website: www.frankcass.com

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The battle for the Ukraine: the Red Army's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation, 1944: (the Soviet general staff study). —(Cass series on Soviet (Russian) study of war; no. 15)
1. World War, 1939–1945—Campaigns—Ukraine
I. Glantz, David M. II. Orenstein, Harold S. (Harold Steven), 1948–
940.5 42177

ISBN 0-203-00897-9 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-7146-5278-4 (cloth)
ISSN 1462-0960

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Battle for the Ukraine: the Red Army's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation, 1944 (the Soviet General Staff study)/translated and edited by David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein.
p. cm. —(Cass series on the Soviet (Russian) study of war, ISSN 1462–0960; 15)
Translation of the Soviet General Staff study no. 14.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-7146-5278-4 (cloth)
1. World War, 1939–1945–Campaigns—Ukraine—Korsun'—Shevchenkovskii.
I. Glantz, David M. II. Orenstein, Harold S. (Harold Steven), 1948– III. Soviet Union. Raboche—Krest'ianskaia Krasnaia Armiia. General'nyi shtab. IV. Series.
D764.3.K68B38 2003
940.54 2177–dc21
2003048869

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher of this book.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Contents

List of Maps

Editor's Foreword

Foreword by Lt-Gen. P.P.Vechny

1. The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

   General situation and operational plan

   Preparation of the operation

   Course of combat operations

   Encirclement of the German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping (24 January–3 February)

   Destruction of the German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping (4–17 February)

   Overall results

2. German Defensive Battles in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Region

   Grouping of encircled forces and characteristics of the enemy defense

   Combat operations of the encircled enemy grouping

3. Combat Operations of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cavalry Corps in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

   Cavalry corps operations during the encirclement

   Cavalry corps operations during the liquidation of the encircled forces

   Conclusions

4. Air Operations during the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

   Preparation of the operation

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Air combat operations
Results of combat air operations

Editor's Appendices

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Maps

1. Situation in the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts at the end of January 1944
2. Overall concept for the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation
3. 'Castling' of the 5th Guards Tank Army
4. Encirclement of the German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, 24 January–3 February 1944
5. Destruction of the encircled German grouping, 4–17 February 1944
6. Defensive battle of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, 3–17 February 1944
7. Missions and arrival of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cossack Cavalry Corps in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation
8. Combat operations of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cossack Cavalry Corps during the encirclement of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, 26 January–3 February 1944
9. Operations of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cossack Cavalry Corps during the liquidation of the encircled enemy grouping
10. Basing of 2d and 5th Air Armies' aircraft and enemy aircraft by the end of 25 January 1944
11. Wire communications of the 53d Army on 25 January 1944
12. Organization of the 6th Tank Army's defense on 4 February 1944
13. Combat operations of the 5th Guards Tank Army in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (January–February 1944)
14. Rear-service organs and supply routes in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation
15. The Winter Campaign, December 1943–April 1944
16. Operations on the Right Bank of the Ukraine (25 December 1943–15 April 1944)
17. The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (24 January–17 February 1944)
18. Initial force dispositions on 23 January 1944
19. Soviet operational plan for the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation
20. The situation at 1900 hours, 24 January
21. The situation at 1900 hours, 25 January
22. The situation at 1900 hours, 26 January
23. The situation at 1900 hours, 27 January
24. The situation at 1900 hours, 28 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

25. The situation at 1900 hours, 29 January
26. The situation at 1900 hours, 30 January
27. The situation at 1900 hours, 31 January
28. The situation at 1900 hours, 1 February
29. The situation at 1900 hours, 2 February
30. The situation at 1900 hours, 3 February
31. The situation at 1900 hours, 4 February
32. The situation at 1900 hours, 5 February
33. The situation at 1900 hours, 6 February
34. The situation at 1900 hours, 7 February
35. The situation at 1900 hours, 8 February
36. The situation at 1900 hours, 9 February
37. The situation at 1900 hours, 10 February
38. The situation at 1900 hours, 11 February
39. The situation at 1900 hours, 12 February
40. The situation at 1900 hours, 13 February
41. The situation at 1900 hours, 14 February
42. The situation at 1900 hours, 15 February
43. The situation, 16–17 February
44. The situation at 1900 hours, 18 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Editor's Foreword

In January 1944, the Soviet *Stavka* (Supreme High Command) and the Red Army General Staff planned and conducted an operation to clear German forces from the right bank of the Dnepr River and to prepare the way for a subsequent offensive deep into the Ukraine. Since the ferocious Battle of Kursk in July and August 1943, Soviet forces had been conducting massive attacks across virtually the entire German Eastern Front. This ambitious strategic offensive was designed to exploit the Kursk victory and throw German forces back westward across the Dnepr River. By October, the Soviets had reached the Dnepr River line and in November they thrust resolutely across this forbidding water barrier. Attacking in early November from a small bridgehead north of Kiev, the forces of the Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front had by December seized a sizable bridgehead west of the river and successfully parried a series of strong and determined German counter-thrusts aimed at recapturing Kiev and the critical Dnepr River line.

On Christmas Day, to the surprise of frustrated German commanders, the 1st Ukrainian Front forces burst forth from their strategic bridgehead west of the Dnepr and, spearheaded by two tank armies, drove to within a few kilometers of German Army Group South headquarters at Vinnitsa. Further south, Soviet armies of the 2d Ukrainian Front drove from bridgeheads they had captured across the Dnepr River near Kremenchug and rolled German forces back along the river's southwestern bank toward Kirovograd. Heavy fighting raged throughout January in the Berdichev area, east of Vinnitsa, and around the critical city of Kirovograd, as the now desperate German defenders strove to halt further Soviet advance into the Ukraine. By late January, and at the cost of tremendous exertions and irreplaceable losses, the Germans managed to halt the Red Army's onslaught short of Vinnitsa. Although Kirovograd fell to Soviet arms, German forces still clung to a narrow salient along the Dnepr River anchored on the towns of Kanev and Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii. While the carnage of the previous weeks had taken a heavy toll on their strength, the Germans were convinced that the Soviet offensive had finally run its course. To their utter consternation, it had not. Like a phoenix, the wounded Red Army was about to rise and strike again, this time at the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient.

The ensuing bloody struggle was of legendary proportions, and, like all legends, it produced its share of glories and controversies. This volume provides

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

a candid Soviet account of that operation, which has since been termed by Soviet historians the 'Stalingrad on the Dnepr'.

The nucleus of this volume is a direct translation of the first four chapters of Volume 14 of a multi-volume Red Army General Staff study on wartime Red Army operations. About half of Volume 14 deals with the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation. The overall series, entitled *Collection of Materials for the Study of War Experience,* consists of 36 volumes of detailed analysis of wartime operations. Classified secret and individually numbered, these volumes are notable for their accuracy and candor and, collectively, they offer a unique picture of the Red Army at war.

To these chapters from the Soviet war experience volume, I have added detailed materials regarding the role of specific formations and types of forces in the operation. I have included translated original maps from the war experience volume for illustrative purposes, and, where possible, I have translated key terms on the maps. The extensive appendices contain additional narrative materials about the operation, detailed Soviet orders of battle, tables of Red Army strengths and losses, a list of key Soviet command cadre, and a complete set of daily maps detailing the course of the operation.

In the text of the volume itself, the nomenclature for German formations and units has been altered from the Russian to more common and understandable Western usage (for example, panzer for tank; panzer grenadier for motorized; XXX Army Corps for 30th Army Corps).

I have also added editorial comments throughout the volume to correct obvious errors in fact, as well as several appendices. The appendices are designed to complement the detailed Russian maps and provide other critical information absent from the original General Staff study.

I offer special thanks to my wife Mary Ann, whose tireless editorial efforts made the Russian more comprehensible to the Western reader. I alone am responsible for any errors or shortcomings which may exist.

The editor's appendices are as follows:

1. Documents on the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation.
2. Creation of the 6th Tank Army and its operations in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation.
3. The role of the 5th Guards Tank Army in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation.
4. The engineer forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation.
5. The functioning of transport and the organization of the delivery of materiel supplies in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation.
6. Soviet order of battle in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (as of 1 February 1944).
7. Charts and tables on Red Army strength and losses in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

8. Key Soviet command cadre in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (as of 1 February 1944).
9. Strength of selected German armored formations in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (based on archival reports).
10. Map supplement.

DAVID M.GLANTZ

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Foreword

The following participated in preparing materials for *Collection No. 14:*

Lieutenant-General L.V.Oiakov, Lieutenant-General of Aviation N.A. Zhuravlev, Lieutenant-General of Communications I.N.Naidenov, and Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces M.A.Shalin;

Major-Generals P.N.Kalinovskii, Ia.A.Kutsev, I.D.Nefterev, and N.O. Pavlovsky, Guards Major-General of Tank Forces L.P.Nikolaev, Major-General of Aviation V.I.Loginov, and Major-General of Technical Forces F.Ia.Gerasimov;

Colonels I.A Bubnov, A.A.Vasil'ev, S.A.Vladimirov, N.P.Boiko, A.F. Goncharov, G.M.Efremov, F.F.Kiselev, V.L.Kirillov, P.S.Korpachev, L. A.Lisitsin, M.P.Muselev, D.Kh.Melikhov, N.G.Pavlenko, F.F.Trosian, M.V.Savin, P.Kh.Kharkevich, A.P.Sazhin, M.S.Semilov, A.V.Semenovich, N.Sokolov, V.D.Utkin, G.M.Chumakov, and B.N.Iakovlev;

Captain 1st Rank V.I.Sumin;

Lieutenant-Colonels I.V.Boldyrev, G.P.Zakharov, F.G.Il'in-Tikhomirov, G.I.Makarev, A.F.Zhuchkov, and S.I.Siderov; and

Major M.G.Marchenko.

Chief editor, Lieutenant-General P.P.Vechnyi

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

1
The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

GENERAL SITUATION AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

General situation (see Map 1)

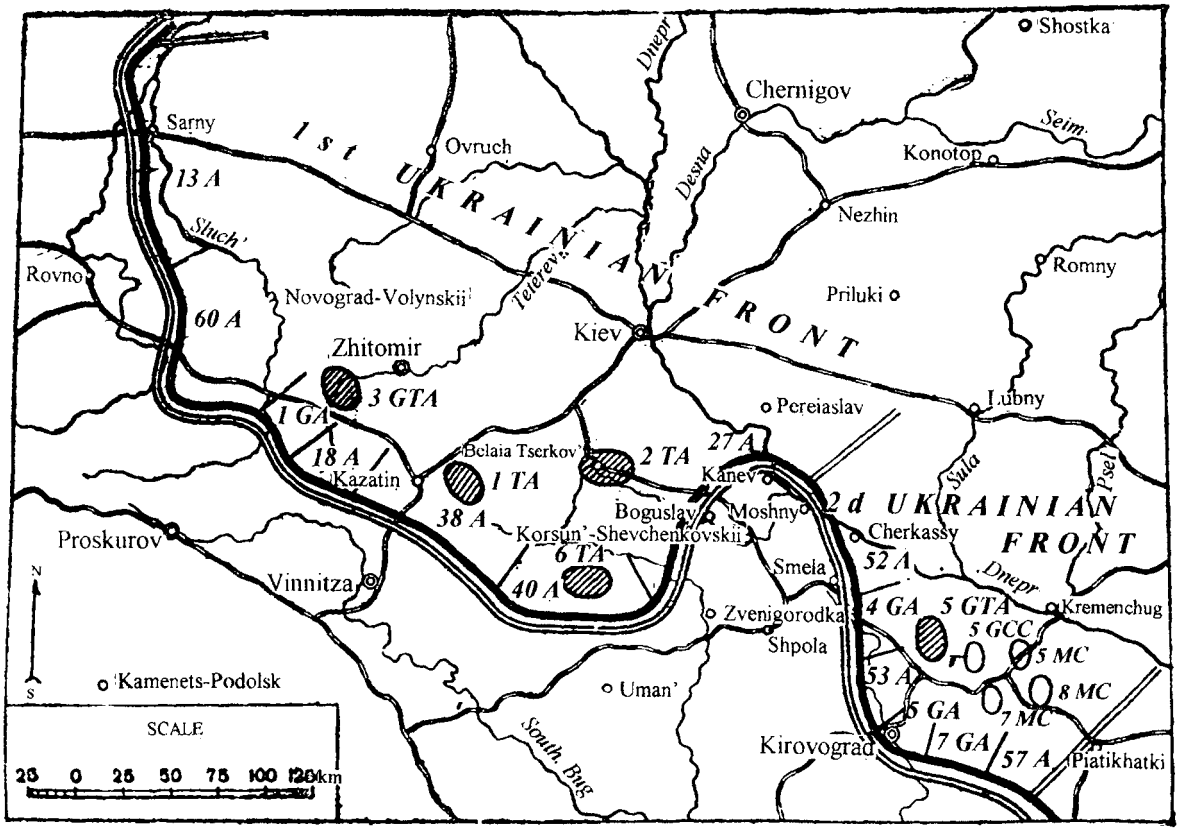
Having forced the Dnepr and captured Kiev, during the winter campaign of 1943–44, the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces purposefully pursued German-fascist forces to the west and southwest. During the second half of January 1944, they reached the Sarny, Kazatin, and Kanev line. By this time the overall length of the front line was more than 600 kilometers. The *front* consisted of 11 armies, including 4 tank armies. The densest force grouping was formed in the *front's* central sector along the Vinnitsa axis. On the whole, the *front's* left flank was significantly more saturated with forces than its right flank.

The forces' advance was temporarily halted at the position they had reached, since, by this time, both the *front* and its lines of communication had become considerably spread out and overextended. The front-line trace was an extremely winding line. On the right flank it faced to the west, and on the left flank it was turned to the southwest, south, and even southeast. While the left flank was still anchored along the Dnepr River, the right flank in the Sarny region stood more than 300 kilometers forward of the Dnepr. By the end of January 1944, German resistance intensified along the entire front, especially along the Vinnitsa and Uman' axes.

Having successfully conducted the Kirovograd operation during the first half of January 1944, on 18 January the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces also halted their advance, consolidated their occupied positions, and, while repelling the enemy's practically continuous attacks, prepared for further offensive operations. At this time the 2d Ukrainian Front's overall front line extended up to 250 kilometers.

The *front* consisted of seven armies (including one tank army). There were one cavalry and three mechanized corps in the *front* reserve, whose rear-area support organizations required replenishment.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 1. Situation in the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts at the end of January 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The *front's* forward line was also fragmented but considerably less than the 1st Ukrainian Front's front line. The *front's* right flank turned to the west and southwest, while the left flank turned to the southwest and, in some sectors, to the south. Enemy resistance intensified considerably, especially along the Kirovograd axis, where he had concentrated five panzer divisions.

Thus, by the second half of January the overall front line of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' combat dispositions ran from Sarny southeast to Kazatin, and further east and northeast to Kanev, from where it ran south to Kirovograd and further southeast to the Piatikhatki region. The boundary line between the *fronts* ran southeast of Kanev.

In the Kanev, Zvenigorodka, and Smela regions at the junction between the *fronts,* the enemy occupied a significantly large salient with a length of 90 kilometers from south to north and up to 125 kilometers from west to east and with an overall area of 11,250 kilometers.

The front line of this salient passed through Kosiakovka, Ol'shanitsa, Kanev, Kreshchatik, and Raigorod (see Map 2). The enemy held the salient with nine infantry divisions, one panzer division, and one panzer grenadier brigade (the 332d, 167th, 168th, 88th, 82d, 72d, 112th, and 57th Infantry Divisions, the 213th Security Infantry Division, the SS Panzer Division 'Viking', and the SS Panzer Grenadier Brigade 'Wallonia').

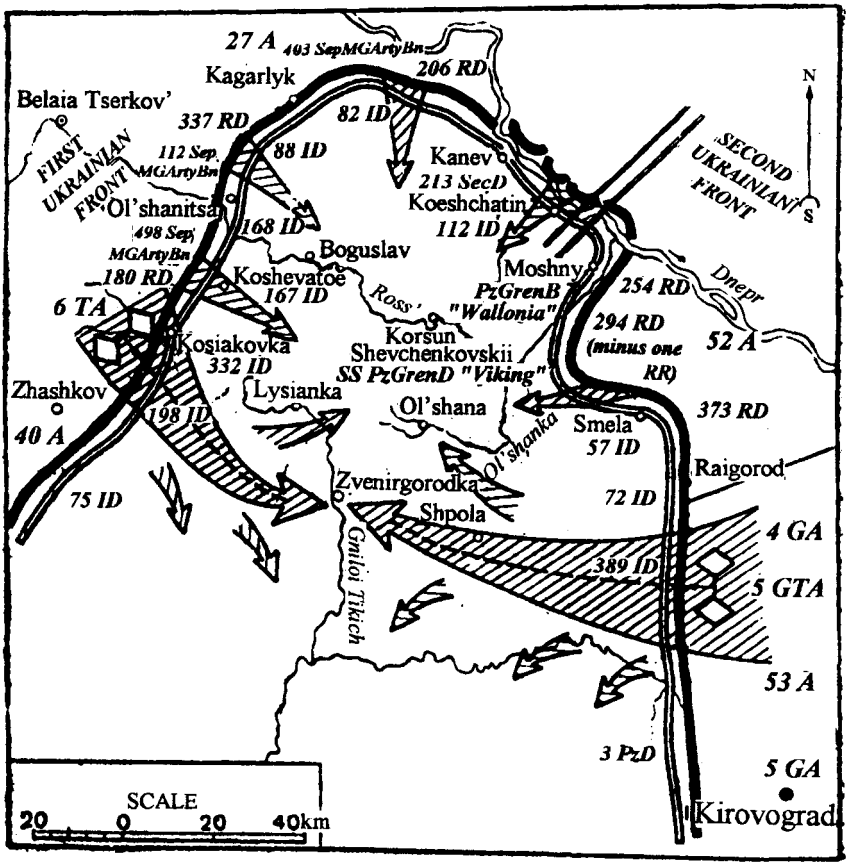
Such a dense enemy grouping in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient had been created as a result of previous combat operations. When the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces forced a crossing over the Dnepr River north of Kanev, our forces captured a significant bridgehead, from which they made serious attempts to advance on Kiev. This forced the enemy to create a most solid defense here and to concentrate his units in this region.

Furthermore, the enemy strove to hold his ground along the Dnepr no matter what, so as to make it impossible for the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' forces to link up on the right bank of the Dnepr and to use the rail lines which led to Kanev and Cherkassy. And, finally, by concentrating a large grouping at the junction between the *fronts,* the enemy attempted to create a threat to the rear area of our advancing forces by means of possible operations along the Dnepr, especially to the north in the direction of Kiev.

Two of our armies opposed these [enemy] forces. These armies were the 2d Ukrainian Front's 52d Army, which consisted of three rifle divisions (the 373d, 254th, and 294th Rifle Divisions, the latter minus one regiment), and the 1st Ukrainian Front's 27th Army, which consisted of three rifle divisions and three separate machine gun-artillery battalions (the 180th, 337th, and 206th Rifle Divisions and the 498th, 112th, and 403d Separate Machine Gun-Artillery Battalions). The 4th Guards Army was deployed south of the 52d Army, and the 40th Army was deployed south of the 27th Army.

Possessing considerable force superiority in this sector, the German command attempted to hold on to this salient no matter what, while counting on the concentration within it of a shock group for operations either along the Belaia

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 2. Overall concept for the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation

Tserkov' axis against the 1st Ukrainian Front's rear area or along a southern axis against the flank of the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces.

Thus, the enemy's salient in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region represented a real threat to the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' forces. The situation required the immediate liquidation of this threat.

Characteristics of the area of combat operations (see Map 2)

The terrain in the area of combat operations was hilly, with considerable swampy and forested areas. In addition, the terrain was heavily criss-crossed with *balkas* [ravines] and streams. The hilly relief created a large number of commanding heights, which provided good visibility for 5–10 kilometers and more.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The terrain's considerable ruggedness and the absence of highways and improved roads created great difficulties in the use by attacking forces of motor-mechanized units and motor vehicle transport, especially during the wet season and the thaw, which arrived in the first half of February 1944.

The region's northeastern borders were directly adjacent to the Dnepr River, which, in this region, had a very wide swampy valley. A comparatively small number of Dnepr River basin tributaries flowed within the confines of the region. The largest of these tributaries, the Ross' River, flowed from west to east through the area of combat operations and divided it into two parts—northern and southern portions. The Ross' River had an average width of 60–100 meters, a depth of 0.6–2 meters, and current speed of 0.5–0.8 meters per second. The river had many bridges, dams, and crossings along its entire length. In many sectors its banks were steep and, in some areas, abrupt. The ground along the banks and on the river bottom were a sandy loam. The Ross' River's southern course was swampy with flood lands of up to 1 kilometer. It posed a considerable obstacle for forces and all types of transport.

The Ol'shanka River flowed basically south to north across the region. In many places it was dammed up and formed swampy flood lands. Its width varied from 5 to 50 meters, its depth from 0.5 to 1.5 meters, and its current speed from 0.2 to 0.7 meters per second. Its banks were also steep and, in many places, abrupt, especially along its southern course.

The Gniloi Tikich River, which flowed through the southwestern part of the region, had a valley whose width averaged 100–300 meters, was swampy in places, and was difficult to traverse, even on foot. Its depth was 0.5–2 meters, and its current speed was 1.5 meters per second. Its bottom was boggy along its entire length. It had many bridges, dams, and fords.

There were many low-lying, swampy areas in the eastern part of the region. Forests and brush covered around 20–25 per cent of the area, and these were distributed in separate masses, occupying from 2 to 25 square kilometers each. The forests were predominantly of mixed composition and mature. As a rule, the terrain along the rivers and stream valleys, along the *balkas,* and around populated areas was covered with bushes.

Despite the region's dense population, the road network was poorly developed. There were very few roads with stone or even metaled road covering. The few separate sectors of highway in the Boguslav and Zvenigorodka regions were of little significance, since they did not provide for transport along the required axes.

As a result of the very rugged terrain and poor meteorological conditions, the network of improved dirt roads, which had been developed rather extensively throughout the region, did not fully support the movement of our numerous tank and mechanized forces. The Zvenigorodka-Shpola road, which was paved for a considerable extent of its length, played a substantive role during the development of the operation.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The air temperature during almost the entire period was generally favorable. During the day it reached +8 degrees (centigrade), and only on rare days did it drop to between −1 and −4 degrees. A cold snap began rather abruptly on 15 February, when the temperature dropped to −6 to −8 degrees. The weather remained cloudy throughout the duration of the operation. Precipitation in the form of drizzle, rain, and snow fell almost every day, particularly in the later days of the operation.

Up to 30 January, many places still remained snow-covered. There was no snow from 31 January through 13 February, the ground thawed, and this had an immediate negative effect on road conditions. From 24 through 28 January and from 5 through 9 February, there was dense fog in the morning and afternoon, during which horizontal visibility dropped to 200 meters.

In general, within the limits of the area of combat operations, the geographical features of the terrain and meteorological conditions created a very difficult situation for mechanized unit operations as well as for motor vehicle transport. At the same time, the closed terrain and the large number of areas of dense brush and forest tracts were favorable for troop movement and camouflage *[maskirovka]*. The large forest tracts were rich in construction materials for defensive structures.

Operational plan (see Map 2)

To liquidate the Germans' Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient, the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command ordered the 1st Ukrainian Front to strike a blow from west to east from the region southeast of Belaia Tserkov' in the general direction of Zvenigorodka and the 2d Ukrainian Front to attack from east to west from the region north of Kirovograd through Shpola, also in the general direction of Zvenigorodka.

In view of the fact that the 1st Ukrainian Front's mobile forces had to cover a distance of 50 kilometers to Zvenigorodka, while the 2d Ukrainian Front's mobile forces had to cover 75 kilometers, the latter was to begin the offensive a day earlier. The first day of the 2d Ukrainian Front's offensive was set for 25 January, while that of the 1st Ukrainian Front was 26 January.

The overall *Stavka* concept for the liquidation of the enemy's large Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping consisted of simultaneous crippling, concentric attacks by the strong shock groups of the two adjacent *fronts*' internal flanks. These attacks were to be delivered against the weakest sectors of the enemy's front.

The decision of the 2d Ukrainian Front commander

In carrying out the instructions received from the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command, the 2d Ukrainian Front commander decided to deliver his main attack by the internal flanks of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies with a force of 14 rifle divisions from the Verbovka and Vasilivka front (in a 19-kilometer sector) in the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

general direction of Shpola and Zvenigorodka, where the formations would seek to link up with the 1st Ukrainian Front's mobile group.

Five heavy howitzer artillery brigades, three gun artillery regiments, one light artillery brigade, three antitank [tank destroyer] artillery regiments, six mortar regiments, five guards mortar regiments, one gun artillery brigade, one antitank artillery brigade, and two antiaircraft artillery battalions were attached to the forces operating on the main attack axis. In the main attack sector, the 5th Guards Tank Army, which consisted of the 8th, 20th, and 29th Tank Corps, was to be committed into the penetration to exploit success in the general direction of Zvenigorodka (through Shpola).

In accordance with this decision, the armies received the following missions:

The 4th Guards Army, consisting of seven rifle divisions (one in the second echelon), two tank regiments, and one tank brigade (up to 50 tanks in all), with an artillery density [per kilometer] of up to 100 tubes (including 82mm and 120mm mortars), was to penetrate the front in the Verbovka and Balandino sector (with a sector width of 10 kilometers) and attack in the direction of Sam Gorodok and Shpola. The army was supported on the right, along the Gniloi Tashlyk River, by the 52d Army's operations.

The 53d Army, consisting of 10 rifle divisions (1 in the second echelon) and 1 tank regiment, with an artillery density of up to 100 tubes, was to penetrate the front in the (excluding) Balandino and Vasilivka sector (with a sector width of 9 kilometers) and attack in the general direction of Tishkovka, Mezhirovka, and Krymki, with its front turned toward Panchevo.

The 5th Guards Tank Army, upon arriving at the penetration in the 53d Army's sector, was to reach the Zhuravka, Listopadovo, and Tashkovka region (a depth of up to 24 kilometers) by the close of the first day of the offensive and to advance into the Shpola, Vasil'kovka, Skotorevo, and Krymki region (a depth of up to 50 kilometers) by the close of the second day of the offensive. Depending on the situation, subsequently the army was to be prepared for operations either against Zvenigorodka or Petrakovka.

Operating to the north, the 52d Army delivered a supporting attack along the left flank in the general direction of Gorodishche. The 5th Guards and 7th Guards Armies, operating to the south, delivered a secondary attack on the main attack axis one day before the beginning of the offensive to prevent the enemy from redeploying the panzer divisions located on the Kirovograd axis.

The 5th Guards Don Cossack Cavalry Corps was in the *front* reserve. The *[front's]* mechanized corps continued to recover and refit.

The commencement of the offensive on the main attack axis was designated for 0830 hours on 25 January.

The selection of the main attack axis north of Kirovograd was based upon the consideration that this sector was where the enemy had the weakest defenses, since by this time all of his panzer divisions were concentrated along the Kirovograd axis. All of this permitted the attainment of the favorable correlation of forces on the main attack axis seen in Table 1:

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

TABLE 1

	Our forces	*Enemy forces*	*Correlation*
Infantry	14 rifle divisions	2 infantry divisions	7:1
Guns	1,787	293	6:1
Tanks	270	20	13:1

The decision of the 1st Ukrainian Front commander

A characteristic feature of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation for the 1st Ukrainian Front forces was that it was conducted under conditions of fierce enemy counterattacks along almost the entire front and it was especially persistent along the Vinnitsa axis in the 38th Army's sector and against the 40th Army's right flank. The liquidation of these counterattacks required considerable forces and weaponry and, particularly, artillery and tanks, since, as a rule, the enemy had committed large tank formations into combat.

A shock group was created in the Tynovka, Koshevatoe, and Stavishche region along the internal flanks of the 40th and 27th Armies for joint operations with the 2d Ukrainian Front to liquidate the Germans' Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient. The group, which was designated for operations eastward, consisted of the 6th Tank Army, the 47th Rifle Corps, the 104th Rifle Corps (from the 40th Army), a composite detachment from the 498th Separate Machine Gun-Artillery Battalion, and the 337th and 180th Rifle Divisions (from the 27th Army).

It should be kept in mind that the 6th Tank Army had begun organizing its formations only on 21 January. It consisted of the 5th Guards Tank Corps and 5th Mechanized Corps, and it had no means of reinforcement or army staff [headquarters]. The 5th Guards Tank Corps commander was appointed the commander of the 6th Tank Army. Both corps were situated within the infantry's combat formations and were conducting continuous combat against counterattacking enemy forces. By 26 January there was a total of 91 tanks and 16 self-propelled guns in the army. The army had no rifle formations in its make-up, but it was obviously inexpedient to subordinate a rifle corps to the army while it was still being organized. Subsequently, during the operation the 47th Corps was subordinated [to the tank army].

The shock group of the 40th Army received the mission to penetrate the enemy's defensive front in the Tynovka and (excluding) Kosiakovka sector and to develop the offensive toward Zvenigorodka while simultaneously protecting the operation from the south. The shock group of the 27th Army was to penetrate the enemy's defense in the Kosiakovka and Koshevatoe sector and develop the offensive in the general direction of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii. Simultaneously, the 27th Army's forces were to deliver a series of supporting attacks along the army's entire front.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Having penetrated the enemy's tactical defensive depth using its combined-arms formations, the 6th Tank Army was to enter the penetration and advance swiftly to the Zvenigorodka region in order to link up with units of the 2d Ukrainian Front's 5th Guards Tank Army, which, simultaneously, was advancing toward this region from the east. Twenty-six January 1944 was designated the first day of the offensive for the 1st Ukrainian Front's shock groups.

Thus, the operations by the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' forces were directed toward a swift meeting attack by the two tank armies and their link-up in the Zvenigorodka region. These powerful mobile groups were to carry out the initial encirclement of the army forces occupying the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient and create an external encirclement front. The rifle divisions which were following them were to create an internal encirclement ring and splinter and destroy the encircled enemy forces.

PREPARATION OF THE OPERATION

Regrouping of forces

Despite the fact that intense combat operations did not cease for a single day, and all preparatory measures for conducting the operation were conducted under severe time constraints, the preparation was completed on time. The 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' staffs carefully prepared the complex operation. The nature and content of the ensuing work can be judged by the activities of the 2d Ukrainian Front's staff and forces during the operation's preparatory period. The staff and forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front also completed work which was the same in content but somewhat less in volume.

The 2d Ukrainian Front's headquarters began its operational preparations on 18 January. Basically it amounted to a necessary and very considerable regrouping of forces, their comprehensive combat preparation, and their support by all necessary combat means.

By the time the offensive commenced, the following regrouping of the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces had taken place. On 18 January the 97th Howitzer Artillery Brigade of the 53d Army was subordinated to the 4th Guards Army commander. On 21 January the 31st Guards Rifle Division from the 7th Guards Army was transferred to the 4th Guards Army and concentrated in the Tomashevka region. On the same day, the 5th Guards Army's 42d Light Artillery Brigade was transferred to the 4th Guards Army and was concentrated in the forest east of Bondyrevo.

On 21 January the 58th Gun Artillery Regiment, the 438th Antitank Artillery Regiment, and the 49th and 17th Guards Mortar Regiments were transferred from the 52d Army to the 4th Guards Army and were concentrated in the Iurchikha region. On the same day, the 173d Tank Brigade was resubordinated from the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

52d Army to the 4th Guards Army commander and was concentrated on the southern outskirts of Kamenka.

The 5th Guards Tank Army was covertly and swiftly 'castled' from the Kirovograd region to the Bondyrevo and Krasnosilka region. Even more regroupings could be pointed out, but those cited are sufficient to show how great was the scale of the regroupings undertaken by the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces during the preparatory stage of the operation. Regroupings by the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces were just as extensive.

The headquarters and forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front had to prepare the operation under extremely complex conditions. On 13 January, its front line extended 25 kilometers west of Zvenigorodka, and during the last ten days of January intense battles were fought 50 kilometers west of Zvenigorodka, with success alternating between the two sides. Meanwhile, units of the 40th Army (the 136th Rifle Division, one regiment from the 167th Rifle Division, and the 6th Motorized Rifle Brigade) fought battles in encirclement in the Basova, Rizino, and Iankova region. Therefore, in fact, the operational preparations continued while intense battles were being fought along the front. As a result, in some sectors our units were even forced to withdraw. In these circumstances it was extremely difficult to create a shock group for operations against Zvenigorodka. And it must be said that, despite all of these difficulties, *front* forces coped with these missions. The enemy was halted, and a force superiority was created on the main attack axis. On 26 January, the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front launched a successful offensive.

During the preparatory period of the operation it was necessary for the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces and headquarters to obtain detailed information about the enemy defense, resolve on the terrain all questions regarding co-operation, work out questions of co-operation with neighboring units, and dig in [all forces], especially artillery, at jumping-off positions. It was essential that the strictest *maskirovka* be maintained in the concentration regions regarding the force grouping, artillery, and tanks. The use of radio equipment before the commencement of the offensive was categorically forbidden. While fulfilling these requirements, forces conducted reconnaissance to capture prisoners, to gain more detailed information about the enemy grouping, and to reveal the Germans' system of defensive fires. An officers' personal reconnaissance of the offensive sector was carried out, orientation maps were compiled, etc. However, during the operation's preparatory period reconnaissance was conducted poorly, and, as a result, the forces did not know before the commencement of the offensive precisely where the forward edge of the enemy defense and security [elements] were located in front of their combat formations. As a result, a day before the offensive the commands of the 2d Ukrainian Front's 4th Guards and 53d Armies were forced to organize operations by reinforced forward battalions for the purpose of conducting reconnaissance.

During preparation for the offensive operations in the 4th Guards and 53d Armies, assault battalions were created on the main attack axis to penetrate the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

enemy defense and support the exploitation of success by army main forces. Each assault battalion consisted of a rifle battalion, a horse-drawn 76mm gun battery, two or three tanks, one self-propelled gun, and a squad of sappers [combat engineers] with mine detectors. Sixteen such assault battalions were created in the 53d Army's 26th and 75th Rifle Corps alone.

As a result of the regroupings, in the 19-kilometer-wide penetration sector (from Verbovka to Vasilivka), 12 rifle divisions were concentrated in the first echelon and 2 divisions in the second echelon (6 from the 4th Guards Army and 6 from the 53d Army). There were 1,787 guns and mortars concentrated in this sector, which amounted to an average of 94 pieces per kilometer of frontage.

On the enemy's side, two infantry divisions and one panzer division (the 389th and 106th Infantry Divisions and the 3d Panzer Division) were defending in the penetration sector.

Operational deception (maskirovka) (see Map 3)

During the preparatory period, the 2d Ukrainian Front headquarters successfully conducted measures for operational *maskirovka*.

The staffs of engineer, armored, and mechanized forces compiled an operational *maskirovka* plan to conceal from the enemy the 'castling' of the 5th Guards Tank Army and reinforcing artillery units from the Ovsianikovka, Gruzkoe, and Oboznovka region to the Krasnosilka region.

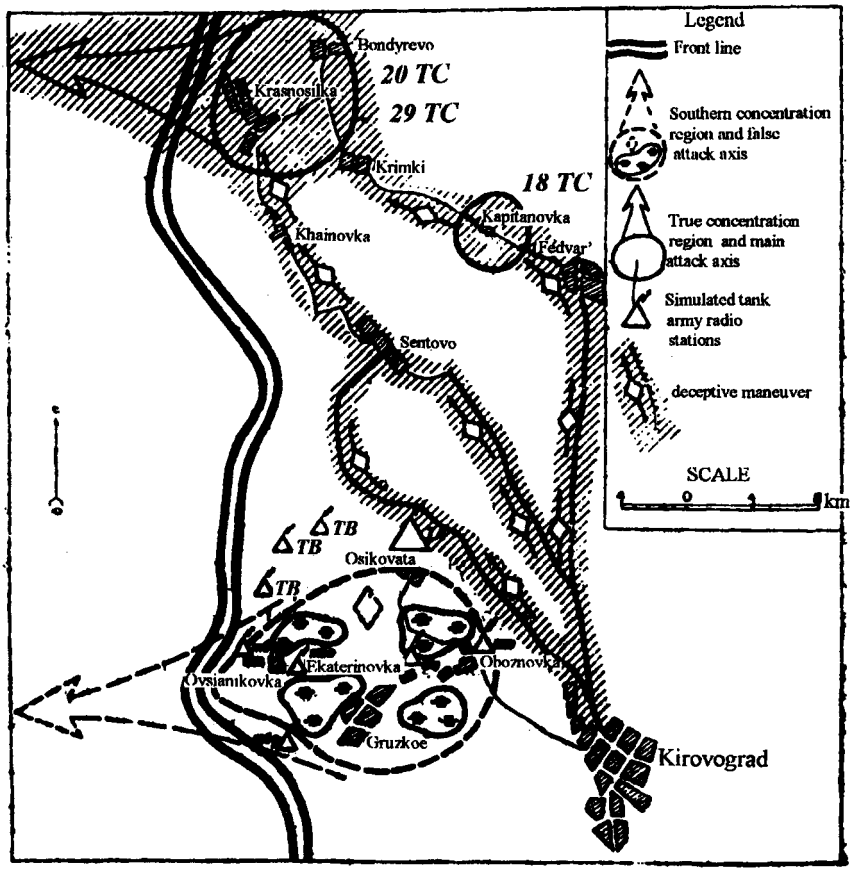
The basic concept for operational *maskirovka* was to convey to the enemy the impression that a large tank and artillery grouping was concentrating in the region west of Kirovograd. To these ends, after the commander's personal reconnaissances were conducted, 5 false tank unit concentration regions and 20 false artillery unit concentration regions were selected. From 19 through 22 January, 126 dummy tanks, 36 false artillery guns, and 200 figures of soldiers were prepared and set up in the false concentration regions. In addition, 40 prefabricated dummy tanks which had been prepared beforehand were used.

At the same time as the dummies were set up, false artillery firing positions and storage depots with fuel and ammunition were outfitted, dug-outs and slit trenches were prepared at the false artillery positions, and tank tracks were laid into the false tank concentration regions. By 23 January 17 false fuel and ammunition depots, 17 dug-outs, and 15 false slit trenches had been created.

To animate the false concentration regions, continuous work went on to establish tracks representing the movement of tracked and wheeled vehicles, mock-ups were moved from one place to another, *maskirovka* was (constantly) reinvigorated, and open fires simulating the flames of burning tanks were maintained in readiness.

The plan also envisioned the use of powerful radio stations with loud-speakers to simulate night regroupings of tank units by transmitting the noise of tank movements to the front line. Tractors and prime movers, which had towed damaged tanks from previous battlefields, were used for this purpose.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 3. 'Castling' of the 5th Guards Tank Army

The simulation of tank formation and unit staff work in former deployment areas after their transfer to new concentration regions was very carefully organized and conducted. Special radio stations from headquarters and units located in this front sector were assigned for this purpose.

The radio station from the headquarters of one guards rifle corps located in Osikovata was used as the tank army radio station, and radio stations in Ekaterinovka and Oboznovka were used as tank corps radio stations. Rifle division radio stations located near the false tank formation and unit concentration regions simulated the operation of tank brigades' radio stations. All of these radio stations imitated the work of tank unit staffs using a code especially developed by the army staff communications section. They operated on the same wavelength and at the same time that tankers usually communicated

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

by radio. The content of radiograms closely expresses the characteristic features of tank unit and formation staff work.

In addition, the headquarters of the 5th Guards Army's armored and mechanized forces developed a special list of codes which were intentionally carelessly encoded as well as typical texts for radio conversations among individual units and formations. It should be noted that, during these radio transmissions and conversations, the enemy often attempted to jam the broadcasts, from which it can be concluded that these transmissions and conversations were recorded by the enemy.

The fact that, as before, the Germans kept all of their panzer divisions along the Kirovograd axis, that enemy artillery and aviation continued to shell false tank and artillery concentration regions, and that false batteries set up near the forward edge of our defense were subjected to shelling, even by machinegun fire, indicated that the enemy had been misled. Enemy reconnaissance aircraft continually appeared above our false tank and artillery concentration regions, and, as a rule, artillery and mortar shelling followed them. From 22 through 28 January, the enemy launched 1,410 shells and bombs against false concentration regions, and, as a result, 2 false batteries were destroyed.

The simulation of artillery unit concentrations and actions was accomplished by specially allocated roving guns. Troop activity *[aktivnost']* was simulated by the allocation of special detachments and groups from military units deployed along the front line.

All these measures resulted in the fact that, until the second day of the offensive, the enemy was deceived with regard to force strength, location, and the axis of the main attack for the planned offensive.

Engineer support of the penetration

To ensure the rapid regrouping of formations and their covert concentration in new regions, all army and attached engineer units of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies carried out additional reconnaissance and checks for mining during 19–22 January. The main lateral roads, comprising a total distance of 135 kilometers, were repaired and outfitted with signs.

An additional check for the presence of mines in forest tracts and other regions was carried out in timely fashion to provide security for troop deployments into the new concentration regions. Roads and areas for which there had not been time to sweep completely for mines were safely fenced off. Thus, a total 4,000 square meters of road was closed, and areas were fenced off in the Khainovka and Sentovo region, since there were still mine-fields in this area which had been established by the enemy and which contained up to 20,000 antitank mines.

Immediately upon their arrival at the forward edge, forces were covertly deployed, while occupying previously prepared trenches and firing positions and carefully observing *maskirovka* discipline.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Roads designated for supply and evacuation were repaired and outfitted with road signs. In all, 475 kilometers of roadway were repaired, and 24 bridges on these roads were reinforced to bear loads of up to 30 tons. A controlled check of minesweeping was made to ensure safe movement along the roads and easy billeting in populated areas for headquarters and units. In all, 485 kilometers of road and 45 populated areas were checked, and, in the process, 787 enemy antitank mines were detected, removed, and neutralized. Passages in mine-fields and in wire obstacles (one passage per rifle company) were prepared beforehand in front of the enemy's forward edge of the defense. In all, 180 passages were made through wire obstacles and 70 passages through enemy mine-fields.

The operation was also fully prepared with respect to logistical support. POL [fuel and oil] materials and ammunition, forage, and food for the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces were fully provided by the time the operation commenced.

Conclusions

By analyzing the operational planning and preparations, the following principal conclusions can be drawn:

1. The concentric attack by the 2d and 1st Ukrainian Fronts' mobile forces, which resulted in their link-up in the Zvenigorodka region, occurred against the weakest area of the enemy defense and made it possible to destroy the German grouping operating in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region.
2. The regrouping which took place before the commencement of the operation facilitated the achievement of great superiority in personnel and combat equipment along the main attack axes.
3. The successfully implemented operational *maskirovka* measures permitted the concealment from the enemy of the force regrouping and their arrival at new concentration regions.

COURSE OF COMBAT OPERATIONS

The operation to destroy the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping was, in fact, conducted in two stages. The first stage involved the penetration of the defense and the encirclement of the Germans' Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping (24 January–3 February). The second stage encompassed the destruction of the encircled enemy grouping (4–17 February).

The first stage consisted of the penetration of the enemy defense north of Kirovograd and southeast of Belaia Tserkov', the commitment of the 2d and 1st Ukrainian Fronts' mobile groups into the penetration, and their link-up in the Zvenigorodka region. Simultaneously, an external front and internal encirclement ring were created, enemy attempts to break out of encirclement or to provide assistance to the encircled forces from the outside were thwarted, and, finally, the encirclement of the principal German grouping was completed during

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

this period. The second stage consisted of our general offensive against the encircled German grouping, and its ultimate defeat and destruction.

ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE GERMAN KORSUN'-SHEVCHENKOVSKII GROUPING (24 JANUARY–3 FEBRUARY)

Combat operations of the 2d Ukrainian Front (see Map 4)

The offensive operation in the 2d Ukrainian Front's sector began at dawn on 24 January with the actions of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies' reinforced battalions, whose mission was to determine if the forces in front of them had a genuine forward edge of the enemy defense or only covering forces. The operations by these battalions were well prepared and came as a complete surprise to the enemy. This ensured their success. The forward battalions penetrated the forward edge of the enemy defense in the sector from Verbovka to Vasilivka and forced units of the enemy's 389th Infantry Division to withdraw to intermediate defense positions. By the close of the day, our battalions had penetrated up to 6 kilometers into the depth of the enemy defense and had captured Verbovka and a number of strong enemy centers of resistance.

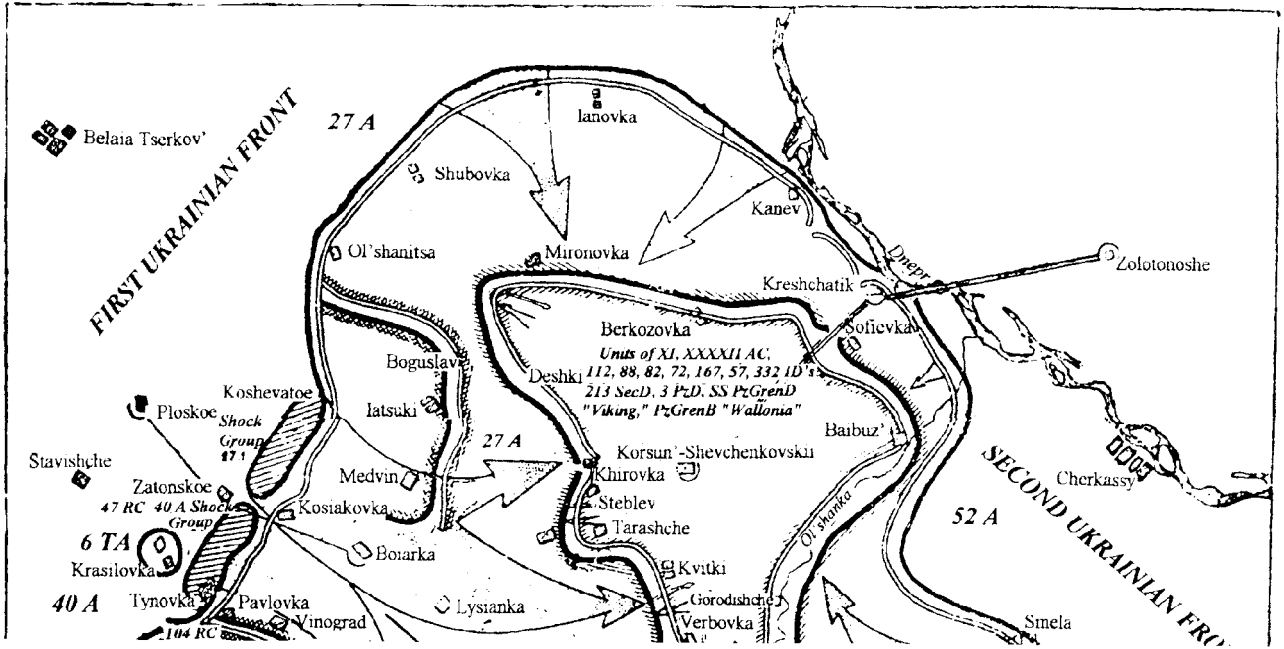
Exploiting the success of the reinforced forward battalions, on the morning of 25 January the main forces of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies also launched their offensive. After intense combat, by the end of the day the 4th Guards Army's forces had captured the eastern portion of Telepino and Radvanovka, and the forces of the 53d Army had occupied Ositniazhka, Pisarevka, and Reimentirovka.

On the same day, the 5th Guards Tank Army, which had its 20th and 29th [Guards] Tank Corps in the first echelon and its 18th [Guards] Tank Corps in the second echelon, was committed into the penetration in the 53d Army's sector from jumping-off positions extending from Kokhanivka to Butyrki. The combat formation which was adopted favored the corps' swift advance and protected the army's flanks, especially the left flank, which was more threatened.

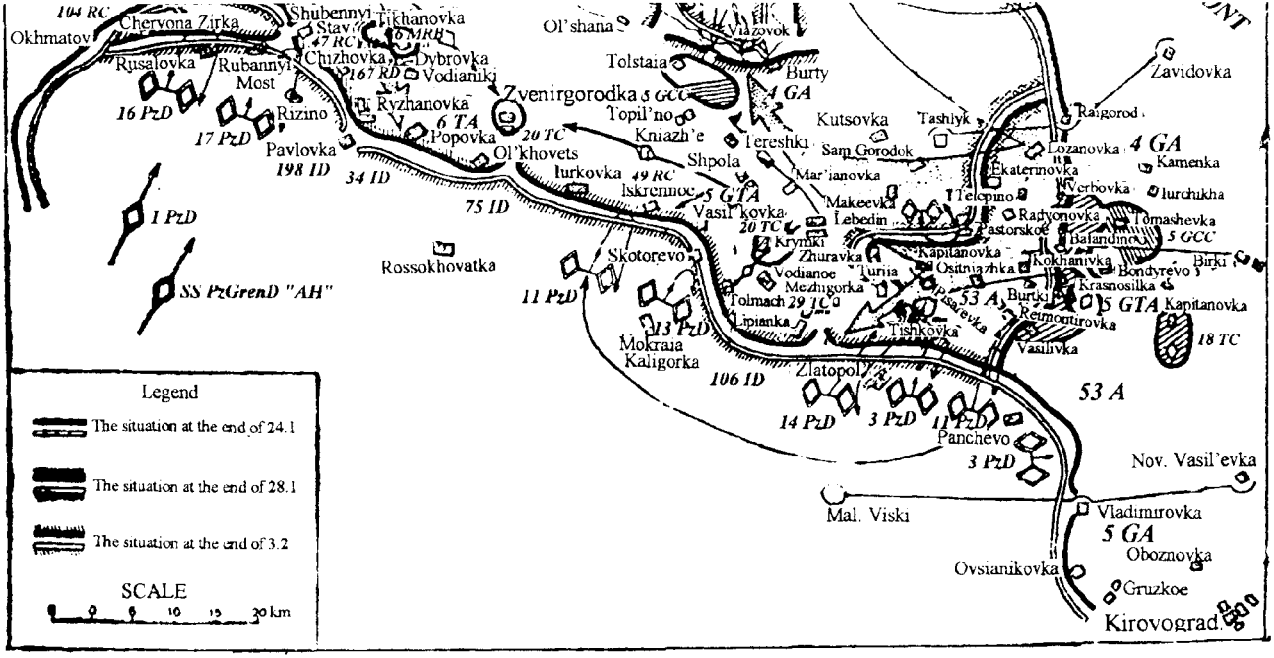
By the end of 27 January, the 5th Guards Tank Army had occupied the following positions: the 29th Tank Corps had reached the Vodianoe, Lipianka, and Mezhigorka front; the 18th Tank Corps had concentrated in the Tishkovka and Pisarevka *[sic]* region; and the brigades of the 20th Tank Corps had occupied the Shpola, Lebedin, and Kapitanovka regions.

At first light on 28 January, the enemy began simultaneous attacks from two directions against the base of our penetration. The attacks were launched by units of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division from the forests west of Pastor skoe, by the 72d, 57th, and 389th Infantry Divisions in the general direction of Ositniazhka, by units of the 11th, 14th, and 3d Panzer Divisions, which had been transferred from the Kirovograd axis, from the Zlatopol' region, and by units of the 106th Infantry Division, also in the general direction of Ositniazhka. The enemy

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 4. Encirclement of the German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Grouping, 24 January–3 February 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

attempted to cut off our tank corps, which had reached the Shpola region, by a simultaneous attack against the base of the penetration. Jointly with the approaching rifle units of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies, the 5th Guards Tank Army's corps repelled all German attacks. During the developing battles, the populated areas of Kapitanovka, Tishkovka, Zhuravka, and Turiia changed hands several times, which made ammunition and fuel deliveries to the tank army difficult.

Employing two of its brigades, on 28 January the 20th Guards Tank Corps reached Zvenigorodka, where it linked up with the 233d Tank Brigade and the 6th Motorized Rifle Brigade of the 5th Guards Tank Corps (the 5th Guards Tank Corps was part of the 1st Ukrainian Front's 6th Tank Army). By this time the 29th Guards Tank Corps had occupied the Tolmach, Lipianka, and Mezhigorka line, and the 18th Guards Tank Corps was repelling fierce enemy tank counterattacks from the Zlatopol' region. Thus, on 28 January the tank ring of our forces in the Zvenigorodka region had closed and the encirclement of the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping was a reality.

However, this initial encirclement ring was not continuous, and there still remained quite a few passages through which the enemy could break out of encirclement. To create a solid encirclement, the rifle units had to create an uninterrupted internal encirclement front. By 28 January the rifle units, which had swiftly advanced behind the tank corps, reached the Ekaterinovka, (excluding) Pastorskoe, Zhuravka, Tishkovka, and Pisarevka front.

Simultaneously with the tank corps' advance to Zvenigorodka, an external front was created along the Zvenigorodka, Shpola, and Turiia line. To this end, the 2d Ukrainian Front commander ordered a series of regroupings aimed at reinforcing the 4th Guards and 53d Armies.

To create a more stable external front, the *front* commander decided to combine three of the 53d Army's divisions (the 6th Guards, 84th Rifle, and 94th Guards) into the 49th Rifle Corps, which was subordinated to the 5th Guards Tank Army commander. The commander of this army received the mission of preventing an enemy penetration from the south to the north and reliably protecting the Zvenigorodka, Iurkovka, Skotorevo, and Vodianoe line. Forces were ordered to create a solid all-round defense along this line, to erect barriers and mine-fields, to entrench artillery, and to exploit damaged tanks and tanks in disrepair by digging them in.

In accordance with the missions assigned to the army, the tank corps were ordered to do the following: the 20th Tank Corps was to organize a firm defense of the western and southwestern parts of Zvenigorodka—it was ordered to hold on to its tanks as a striking force to repel massed enemy counterattacks; the 18th Tank Corps was to be concentrated in the Krymki region and be prepared to launch counterattacks in the direction of Iurkovka, Skotorevo, and Lipianka; and, by means of a firm defense, the 29th Tank Corps was to prevent the enemy from penetrating in the direction of Lebedin and Shpola.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

By 31 January, the enemy grouping northeast of Zvenigorodka had already been half-encircled by the 2d Ukrainian Front's rifle units, which had reached the line of the Gniloi Tashlyk River.

From 1 through 3 February, the enemy attacked repeatedly, employing units of the 11th, 14th, and 3d Panzer Divisions, which had been transferred from Zlatopol', but were unsuccessful in their attempts to penetrate the 5th Guards Tank Army's defensive front by a blow from the region northwest of Mokraia Kaligorka toward Iskrennoe.

The 5th Guards Don Cavalry Corps played a decisive role in the encirclement of the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping. On 26 January, after the arrival of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies' units along the Kutsovka, Zhuravka, and Novomirgorod line, it received the mission of concentrating in the region northeast of Kapitanovka, from where it was to enter swiftly into the enemy's rear area. While developing the offensive in the general direction of Mar'ianovka and Ol'shana, the cavalry corps was to destroy enemy personnel and equipment, smash his rear areas, and disorganize his command and control. In operational co-operation with the 5th Guards Tank Army and the left-flank units of the 27th Army, it had the primary objective of preventing the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping from withdrawing southward.

The corps attempted to enter the penetration on the night of 28 January, but was unsuccessful. On the morning of 28 January, while being attacked by enemy tanks, the corps was forced to fight in the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka region. During the day on 29 January, the corps penetrated the enemy front, entered the penetration together with rifle units, and began to advance swiftly toward the Ol'shana region.

On the night of 30 January, when the corps had reached the Shpola region, it was assigned the mission of employing one division to capture Burty and of executing its previously assigned mission with its main force. On 30 January the corps reached the Kniazh'e, Topil'no, and Tereshki regions, and on 31 January captured Burty and Ol'shana, where it established communications with the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front.

After it turned over the Burty and Ol'shana sector to the 4th Guards Army's units, from 1 through 3 February, the cavalry corps took part in the liquidation of enemy attempts to break out of encirclement to the south. All of these enemy attempts were repelled, and the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping was compressed into the encirclement ring.

The forces of the 52d Army and the 53d Army's left flank launched their offensive simultaneously with the shock group's main forces. Their offensive also developed successfully. By 3 February the 52d Army's forces had reached the Sofievka, Baibuzy, and (excluding) Burty line, and, by the close of 3 February, the 53d Army's left-flank forces had occupied the line of (excluding) Lipianka and Vasilivka, while firmly protecting the left flank of the *front's* shock group.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Combat operations of the 1st Ukrainian Front (see Map 4)

On the morning of 26 January, the 1st Ukrainian Front's shock group went over to the offensive. Although slow, from the very beginning the offensive developed successfully. By the end of 27 January, units of the 40th Army's 47th [Rifle] Corps, the 6th Tank Army, and the 27th Army's shock group were fighting stubbornly along a front from Chervona Zirka, through Vinograd, Boiarka, and Medvin, to (excluding) Boguslav. All units, including those of the 6th Tank Army's formations, were drawn into frontal battles. To achieve closer co-operation, the 47th Rifle Corps was subordinated to the 6th Tank Army commander.

Along the route of our offensive, the units of the 136th Rifle Division, one regiment of the 167th Rifle Division, and units of the 6th Motorized Rifle Brigade fought in encirclement in the Tikhanovka and Dubrovka region, where they remained as a consequence of previous combat operations.

On 28 January the 6th Tank Army's 233d Tank Brigade penetrated to Zvenigorodka by means of an energetic maneuver from the Krasilovka region through Boiarka and Lysianka. On the way, the brigade liberated our encircled units, and, together with units of the 6th Motorized Rifle Brigade, on 28 January it established communications in Zvenigorodka with units of the 5th Guards Tank Army's 20th Tank Corps.

The arrival of the 233d Tank Brigade in the Zvenigorodka region forced the enemy to begin to withdraw under the pressure of the 47th Rifle Corps' rifle units. By the close of 28 January, the 6th Tank Army, with 47th Rifle Corps units, had occupied the Vinograd, Chizhovka, Ryzhanovka, Popovka, and Ol'khovets line with its front facing to the southwest. By this time the 27th Army had reached the Medvin, Iatsuki, (excluding) Boguslav, and Koshevatoe line. Thus, the 6th Tank Army's forces had created an external front, and the 27th Army's forces, by advancing eastward and approaching the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region, had encircled the enemy from the west, thus contributing to the complete encirclement of the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping.

Enemy attempts to attack along the base of our penetration in the Chervona Zirka region and the Rubannyi Most region were successfully repelled by units of the 40th Army's 104th Rifle Corps and by the 6th Tank Army's 47th Rifle Corps.

As a result of sustained combat, by the end of 31 January the 1st Ukrainian Front's shock group was occupying the following positions: the 6th Tank Army's 5th Mechanized Corps was concentrated in the Vinograd region; the 233d Tank Brigade was situated in Pavlovka (northern portion); the 5th Guards Tank Corps' main forces were grouped in the Vodianiki region, with its motorized infantry fighting on the Ryzhanovka, Popovka, and Ol'khovets line; and, having overcome stubborn German resistance, the 47th Rifle Corps was continuing to fight for Rubannyi Most, Rizino, and Pavlovka (south). One of the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

167th Rifle Division's battalions, together with units of the 5th Guards Tank Army's 20th Guards Tank Corps, was defending in the Zvenigorodka region. Units of the 27th Army repelled continuous enemy counterattacks against their right flank and continued to fight in the Shenderovka and Khirovka region. As a result of these battles, army forces captured a number of populated areas and were fighting street battles in Boguslav.

The 6th Tank Army had the mission of preventing an enemy penetration from the southwest, from the Rusalovka, Rizino, and Pavlovka region in the direction of Lysianka. The army was to protect the Shubennyi Stav, Chizhovka, and Ryzhanovka sector most firmly. The 27th Army was ordered to protect the Kvitki, Tarashcha, Shenderovka, and Deshki front steadfastly, while preventing the enemy from penetrating to the west and southwest in the direction of Lysianka.

One must note that, as early as 31 January the 1st Ukrainian Front command divined the enemy intention to break out of encirclement by means of simultaneous attacks from the southwest from the Rusalovka, Rubannyi Most, and Pavlovka sector against Lysianka and from the northeast from the Steblev, Shenderovka, and Tarashcha region to the southwest, also against Lysianka.

In their orders for this day, the 27th and 6th Tank Armies' commanders indicated that the main forces of the encircled troops were concentrated in the Steblev and Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region, from which they would attempt to penetrate in the direction of Shenderovka and Lysianka. The *front* commander warned the army commanders that, simultaneously with this attack, they could expect an attack by a strong enemy tank group from the Rusalovka and Pavlovka sector in the direction of Lysianka. And, in fact, beginning on 31 January the enemy undertook a series of attacks from both of the indicated axes.

The subsequent intense combat from 1 through 3 February brought no success to the enemy. Our units repelled all of his attempts to penetrate to Lysianka from the southwest and link up there with his encircled forces. Simultaneously, the 27th Army's forces continued to squeeze the internal encirclement ring, inflicting considerable losses on the enemy and capturing much equipment. By the end of 3 February, the front line of the internal encirclement ring formed by the 27th Army's units ran through Ol'shana, Shenderovka, Deshki, and south of Mironovka toward Berezovka and Sofievka.

The external encirclement front extended from Okhmatova, through Shubennyi Stav, Chizhovka, Ryzhanovka, and Popovka, to Ol'khovets, where units of the 6th Tank Army linked up with the units of the 5th Guards Tank Army. As noted above, all enemy attempts to break out of encirclement or assist the encircled forces from without were liquidated. This created the prerequisites for the complete defeat and destruction of the encircled enemy grouping.

Thus, by the close of 3 February the internal encirclement front was occupied by the following forces: the 52d Army's units from Sofievka to (excluding) Burty; the 4th Guards Army's units from Burty to (excluding) Ol'shana; and the 27th Army's units from Ol'shana through Shenderovka and Berezovka to (excluding) Sofievka. The 5th Guards Cavalry Corps was fighting in the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Ol'shana region. Units of the 40th Army's 104th Rifle Corps and the 6th Tank Army were defending the external front in the sector from Okhmatova to Ol'khovets and, further to the east, the 5th Guards Tank Army's units were defending from Zvenigorodka to Lipianka, and the 53d Army's units were defending from Lipianka to Vasilivka.

Conclusions from the first stage of the operation

1. As a result of the swift concentric attack by the 2d and 1st Ukrainian Fronts' mobile groupings and the rapid advance of the combined-arms formations, on 3 February the German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, which consisted of nine infantry divisions, one panzer division, and one panzer grenadier brigade, was firmly compressed into an encirclement ring, and a continuous front had been formed around the enemy forces.

2. The original encirclement was achieved on 28 January in the Zvenigorodka region by the formations of parts of the 5th Guards and 6th Tank Armies. Simultaneously with the advance into the Zvenigorodka region, the mobile groupings created the line of the external front, since, from the very first day of our offensive, the enemy attempted to liquidate the penetration by means of attacks against the external flanks of our penetrating forces.

3. To impart necessary stability to the newly formed external front, the following [formations] were subordinated to the tank armies: the 49th Rifle Corps from the 53d Army to the 5th Guards Tank Army and the 47th Rifle Corps from the 40th Army to the 6th Tank Army. Responsibility for holding on to the external encirclement ring was assigned to the commanders of the 6th and 5th Tank Armies.

The units and formations which established the external front were reinforced significantly with artillery weaponry, which also ensured our success in repelling the strong and powerful enemy tank attacks.

4. The internal encirclement ring was formed by rifle formations of the 27th and 4th Guards Armies and units of the 5th Guards Don Cavalry Corps. With its arrival in the Burty and Ol'shana sector on 31 January, the cavalry connected the external flanks of the 4th Guards and 27th Armies, thereby initiating the creation of an external encirclement ring. On this day the enemy's routes to the south were cut off; nevertheless, there was still no continuous front for the external encirclement ring. It took form only on 3 February with the arrival of the 4th Guards Army's units in the Burty and Ol'shana sector.

5. The simultaneous creation of an external front and an internal encirclement ring and the successful liquidation of enemy attempts to break out of encirclement and assist the encircled forces from without created the necessary prerequisites for conducting an operation to destroy the encircled enemy forces.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

DESTRUCTION OF THE GERMAN KORSUN'-SHEVCHENKOVSKII GROUPING (4–17 FEBRUARY)

From 4 through 17 February, the German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping was completely defeated in intense combat by forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front's left flank and by forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front's right wing.

On 12 February the 1st Ukrainian Front's 27th Army was subordinated to Marshal of the Soviet Union [I.S.] Konev, the 2d Ukrainian Front commander, whom the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command made responsible for the liquidation of the encircled enemy grouping.

Combat operations of the 1st Ukrainian Front (see Map 5)

During the entire period from 4 through 17 February, the enemy along the front of the 6th Tank Army and the 40th Army's 104th Rifle Corps did not cease his attempts to penetrate to his encircled forces. To achieve the aims of the penetration, at the beginning of February the German command concentrated the 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions and the SS 'Adolf Hitler' Panzer Division in this sector.

Simultaneously, units and formations from the encircled grouping launched continuous attacks from the Steblev region to the southwest in order to break out of the encirclement ring.

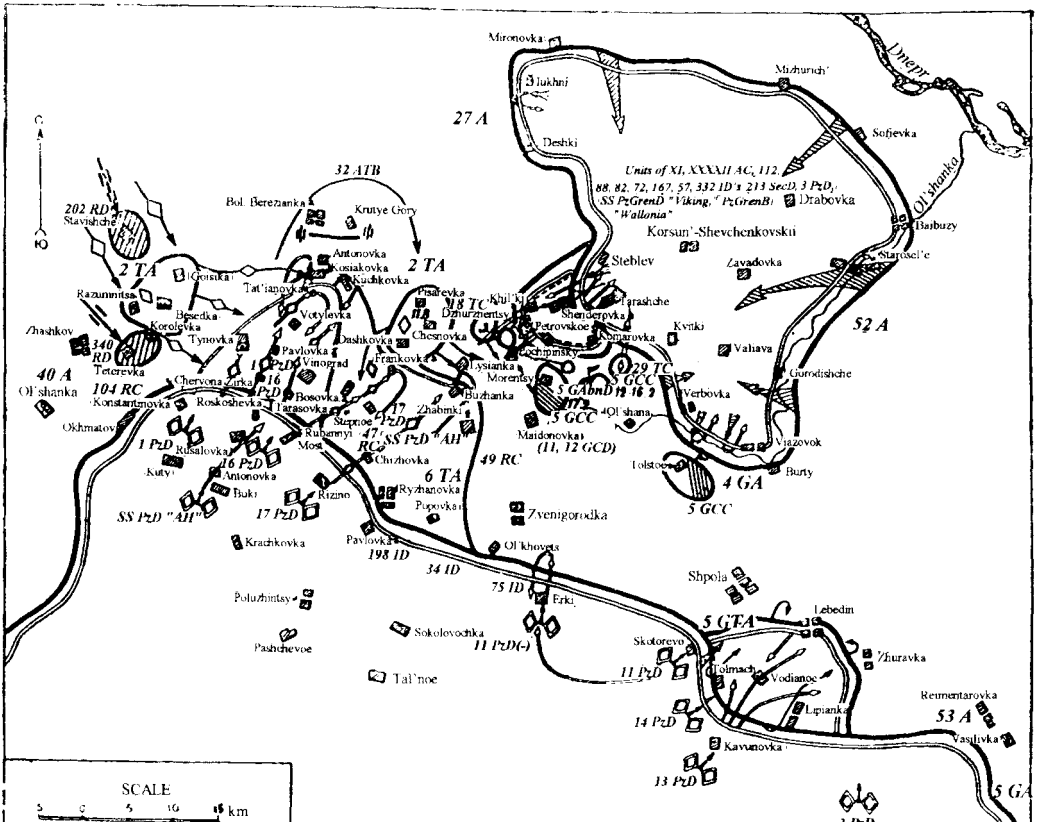
On the morning of 4 February and after a fire raid, the enemy launched an attack with a force of up to 150 tanks and infantry from the Konstantinovka and Roskoshevka line, while concentrating his main efforts along a northerly axis. After a prolonged and intense battle, the enemy succeeded in capturing the populated areas of Tynovka, Pavlovka, Votylevka, and Tat'ianovka. Enemy attempts to develop the offensive to the northeast were liquidated. Throughout 4 February our forces burned and damaged 58 enemy tanks and self-propelled guns during the developing battles.

During 4 February, the 6th Tank Army fought intense battles in the Pavlovka (southern portion) and Ryzhanovka region. On the night of 5 February, the 6th Tank Army's units regrouped in order to re-establish their lost position in the penetration region by means of joint operations with the 40th Army and the 2d Tank Army, which by this time were concentrating in the Goisika and Razumnitsa region.

On 4 February the right-flank units of the 27th Army fought intense battles while repelling enemy attacks launched from the Steblev and Tarashcha region in the direction of Shenderovka and Lysianka.

On 4 February the 1st Ukrainian Front commander assigned the following missions: the 40th Army was to penetrate the enemy front by a concentrated attack from the Goisika, Ol'shanka, Konela line to the southeast and secure the Kuty, Antonovka, and Krachkovka line; and the 6th Tank Army was to push back enemy units to the southeast by a concentrated attack from the Ryzhanovka

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 5. Destruction of the encircled German grouping, 4–17 February 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

and Popovka line and secure the line of (excluding) Krachkovka, Poluzhintsy, Pashchevoe, and Sokolovochka.

Having gone over to the offensive, on the morning of 5 February the 40th Army's left-flank units and the 6th Tank Army's right-flank units encountered stubborn German resistance and continuous tank counterattacks. During the ensuing battles, our forces encircled the enemy tank grouping which had penetrated on 4 February (up to 40 tanks and self-propelled guns) in the Tat'ianovka and Votylevka region.

On 5 February the 27th Army fought against the encircled grouping and, while cutting the encircled forces up into separate groups, compressed the encirclement ring.

After completing its concentration, the 2d Tank Army received the mission of delivering a counterstroke in the directions of Chervona Zirka, Tynovka, and Votylevka. Launching its attack on the morning of 6 February, the 2d Tank Army failed to achieve success.

On the morning of 6 February, the Germans attacked the 6th Tank Army repeatedly, and, as a result of the ensuing battles, they succeeded in penetrating to the western outskirts of Votylevka and capturing the western part of Vinograd. On the night of 6 February, the penetrating enemy tank grouping reached the Kosiakovka, Antonovka, and Kuchkovka region; by the end of the day, counterattacking units of the 2d Tank Army units forced the enemy tanks out of Antonovka. Kosiakovka and Kuchkovka, however, remained in enemy hands. The 202d Rifle Division from the approaching 47th Army was sent to the Stavishche region, and the 340th Rifle Division from the 40th Army's right flank was brought up to the Teterevka and Kovalevka region to reinforce our force grouping. The roads on the approaches to Velikaia Berezniaka and Krutye Gory were being covered by the 32d Antitank [Destroyer] Artillery Brigade, which was approaching the sector. At the same time, the 27th Army was continuing to fight against the encircled enemy units.

While continuing their offensive and advancing to Votylevka, on 7 February the 2d Tank Army's units linked up with the units of the 6th Tank Army. Using part of its forces, the 2d Tank Army battled against the enemy tank grouping which had penetrated to Kuchkovka. After an intense battle, the army drove the enemy from Kosiakovka, which previously had been reoccupied by the enemy, and continued to develop the offensive toward Kuchkovka. Throughout 7 February the 6th Tank Army fought intense combat while repelling strong enemy tank attacks.

To liquidate the enemy tank grouping which had penetrated to the Kuchkovka and Kosiakovka region as swiftly as possible, the *front* commander ordered the 2d Tank Army commander to take personal control of all units operating in this region and to destroy the enemy. Employing units of the 16th Panzer Division and the SS 'Adolf Hitler' Panzer Division, on 8 February the enemy attacked simultaneously from the Pavlovka (northern portion) region and Kuchkovka

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

region and recaptured Votylevka and Tat'ianovka. Enemy attacks in other sectors were repulsed.

Throughout the day on 9 February, the enemy concentrated the 1st Panzer Division in the Buki region. An enemy offensive, whose purpose was to link up with the encircled forces employing the forces of four panzer and three infantry divisions in the direction of Lysianka, was expected in the next few days.

On 10 and 11 February, intense battles were fought in the entire sector of the 2d and 6th Tank Armies, but these resulted in insignificant temporary tactical successes.

As was expected, on the morning of 11 February the enemy launched an offensive from the Roskoshevka and Rizino line in the general direction of Lysianka with a powerful tank shock group consisting of the 1st and 17th Panzer Divisions and the SS 'Adolf Hitler' Panzer Division, with cover provided by units of the 16th Panzer Division in the Chervona Zirka and Votylevka sector. On this day, having transferred its sector to rifle units, the 2d Tank Army reached the Domukovka, Chesnovka, and Pisarevka region with the mission of preventing the enemy from spreading out further to the northeast. The army was subordinated to the 40th Army commander. At the same time, the 206th Rifle Division from the 27th Army was concentrated in the region east of Pisarevka with the mission of preventing an enemy penetration from the Khil'ki region to the southwest.

The enemy began his offensive against the 6th Tank Army's units at 1000 hours with a strong attack by 200 tanks supported by infantry. The attack was delivered by two groups: one with a force of 110 tanks from the Tarasovka and Rubannyi Most line in the direction of Slepok to envelop Bosovka from the south and further toward Frankovka; and the other with a force of up to 90 tanks from the Rizino region in the direction of Chizovka and Zhabinka. Having overcome strong resistance by our forces, by the end of the day the enemy had successfully reached the Frankovka and Buzhanka front. The 27th Army continued successfully to repel attacks by encircled enemy forces.

On the morning of 12 February, the enemy renewed his attacks, and by the close of the day his tank group had succeeded in penetrating to Lysianka from the southwest. Simultaneously, having concentrated a shock group consisting of up to three infantry regiments with tanks, the enemy commenced attacking the sector of the 27th Army's right-flank units from the Steblev and Tarashcha line southwest toward Lysianka. By the end of the day, the enemy had succeeded somewhat in pressing our units back and occupying Khil'ki and Novo-Buda.

From 13 through 16 February, exceptionally intense combat raged in the Lysianka and Shenderovka regions.[1] Having committed large groups of tanks (up to 200 vehicles on a narrow front from the direction of Lysianka) into combat, the enemy attempted to link up by means of a simultaneous attack from the Lysianka region to the northeast and from the Steblev region to the southwest. All his attempts were, however, unsuccessful: our energetic counterattacks threw the enemy back to his jumping-off positions and inflicted serious losses on him.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Having lost hope of receiving outside assistance, the command of the encircled enemy forces decided to attempt to break out of encirclement on the night of 17 February. It was on this very day that energetic joint operations by our tank, cavalry, artillery, and infantry units, with air support, decisively defeated the surviving remnants of the encircled enemy forces.

Combat operations of the 2d Ukrainian Front (see Map 5)

The mission of the 2d Ukrainian Front's right wing was to prevent the enemy from linking up with the encircled units and to destroy the encircled enemy grouping by means of joint operations with the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front's left wing.

Not for a single day did the enemy halt his ferocious attacks from the south against our forces occupying the external front. On 4 February around 130 German tanks from the 11th and 13th Panzer Divisions, supported by large groups of bomber aircraft, attacked from the Skotorevo and Kavunovka regions in the general direction of Shpola and Lebedin. The enemy succeeded in occupying Tolmach, Vodianoe, and Lipianka. However, his subsequent advance was halted.

To further fortify the Zhuravka, Lebedin, and Shpola region, on 4 February the *front* command regrouped and reinforced this region with infantry, tanks, and artillery, taking them from the sectors of the 5th Guards and the 7th Guards Armies.

On 5 February, while attempting to exploit his success, the enemy once again launched a strong tank attack (up to 90 tanks) from the Skotorevo and Vodianoe region in the general direction of Lebedin. However, units of the 5th Guards Tank Army repulsed this attack. Simultaneously with the tank attacks against Shpola and Lebedin, the German command created a strong tank grouping southwest of Zvenigorodka and, by means of attacks from the Rusalovka, Buki, and Rizino region in the general direction of Lysianka, he attempted to link up with the encircled grouping, which was delivering a simultaneous attack from the Steblev region against Shenderovka and Lysianka.

The repulsion of enemy attacks against the external front coincided with an intense struggle to dismember and liquidate the encircled German grouping. To break up the encircled forces, the 52d Army commander was assigned the mission of delivering an energetic attack, together with the 206th Division of the 1st Ukrainian Front's 27th Army, from the Bol'shoe Starosel'e region in the general direction of Valiava, thereby cutting off the enemy's Gorodishche grouping from the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping.

On 16 February the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps, which had been operating since 3 February in the Valiava, Verbovka, Gorodishche, and Viazovok region, received the mission of reaching the Novo-Buda and Komarovka region and, together with the 29th Tank Corps, of driving the enemy from these points and preventing an enemy penetration to the southwest.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

By this time, as a result of stubborn battles, the encirclement ring was closed to such an extent that it was raked by artillery fire, and ammunition and supplies dropped for the encircled Germans from aircraft fell into our hands.

On 8 February our command delivered a surrender ultimatum to the encircled forces. In view of the fact that the ultimatum was not accepted, our forces were ordered to launch an offensive along the entire circumference of the encirclement ring.

On the morning of 10 February, the forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front's right wing, co-operating with units of the 1st Ukrainian Front, went over to a decisive offensive, dismembering and destroying the encircled grouping unit by unit. Units advanced under very difficult conditions, fighting stubborn battles and subsequently occupying a number of populated points.

During the second half of the day on 11 February, the enemy attacked northward from the Erki region with units of his 11th and 13th Panzer Divisions and simultaneously continued his attacks against Lysianka from the southwest and northeast (from the Steblev region). In order to avoid an enemy penetration at the junction between the *fronts,* the 2d Ukrainian Front command undertook measures for the reinforcement of the Morentsy and Maidanovka region, to which units of the 5th Guards Airborne Division and 62d Rifle Division were dispatched.

At 2400 hours on 12 February, the 27th Army, consisting of the 180th, 337th, and 202d Rifle Divisions, the 54th and 159th Fortified Regions, and reinforcing units, was resubordinated to the 2d Ukrainian Front's control.

During the period from 13 through 17 February, the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces gradually compressed the encirclement ring while dismembering the encircled forces and destroying them. At the same time, units of the 27th Army were forced to conduct an intense struggle against a strong enemy shock group, which was attempting to penetrate to the Lysianka region by means of continuous attacks. During these battles the enemy succeeded somewhat in pushing our units back and occupying Shenderovka, Komarovka, and Khil'ki. By the end of 16 February, only these three populated points remained in enemy hands.

Simultaneously, as a result of strong tank attacks from the Rusalovka and Rizino region, the enemy succeeded in pushing back units of the 47th Rifle Corps and the 6th Tank Army and reaching the Lysianka region by 16 February. However, enemy attempts to penetrate from Lysianka to Shenderovka were decisively repelled by our units. At 0300 hours on 17 February, in the Khil'ki and Komarovka sector, the remnants of the encircled enemy forces, numbering up to 10,000 men with 5–7 artillery batteries, 20 tanks, and a drunken human mass, all formed into continuous columns, attempted to break out from the encirclement to the southwest. Some enemy columns succeeded in advancing to Dzhurzhentsy and Pochapintsy. However, there they were halted by units of the 206th Rifle and 5th Guards Airborne Divisions and of the 5th Guards Tank Army.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

On the morning of 17 February, an unbroken movement of infantry and troop trains commenced from Shenderovka and Khil'ki. Up to 20 tanks and 200 infantrymen arrived at Pochapintsy from Komarovka. At 0930 hours a column of up to 5,000 men advanced from Khil'ki to Dzhurzhentsy, and up to an infantry regiment advanced from the Komarovka region to Pochapintsy. However, these remnants of the encircled and defeated German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping also did not manage to penetrate. They were attacked from the northwest by units of the 206th Rifle Division and the 18th Tank Corps (of the 5th Guards Tank Army), which were attacking to the southeast, and by units of the 5th Guards Airborne Division and two of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps' cavalry divisions, which were attacking northwest from the southeast. Simultaneously, the 5th Guards Tank Army's 29th Tank Corps attacked Khil'ki and Komarovka from the rear through Shenderovka, and units of the 2d Tank Army successfully repulsed strong enemy tank attacks to the northeast from the Lysianka region, and, at the same time, destroyed separate, disorganized enemy groups, which were fleeing in panic in different directions from the battlefield along the *balkas* and gorges.

These enemy groups, which were disorganized and had lost all command and control, having abandoned all of their equipment, were dashing around in our rear area, and hiding in ravines and forests. Specially allocated detachments flushed them out and either captured or killed them.

By the end of 17 February, the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping had been completely liquidated. During 18 February detachments from the 27th Army and 4th Guards Army either destroyed or captured the remnants of the defeated forces in the Dzhurzhentsy, Pochapintsy, and Komarovka regions.

OVERALL RESULTS

As a result of the operation conducted during the period from 24 January through 17 February, the Germans' Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, which consisted often divisions and one panzer grenadier brigade (the 112th, 88th, 82d, 72d, 167th, 168th, 57th, and 332d Infantry Divisions, the 213th Security Division, the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division, and the SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade), was completely defeated and their remnants were either destroyed or taken prisoner.

The conducted operation makes it possible to draw the following main conclusions:

1. The operation was planned and conducted under the direct supervision of the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command, which fully ensured close co-operation between the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts.

2. The large grouping of enemy forces was defeated by a concentric offensive launched by the shock groups of two contiguous *fronts*.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Powerful mobile formations—the 5th Guards and 6th Tank Armies-played a leading role in the operation, fulfilling their missions in close co-operation with aviation, cavalry, artillery, and rifle formations.

3. Upon penetration of the enemy's defensive front and the advance of the 5th Guards and 6th Tank Armies to their meeting point, that is, Zvenigorodka, an external front was created immediately to the entire depth of the advance. Units of the advancing tank armies and of the 53d and 40th Armies' combined-arms formations which followed them were used in the formation of this front. The newly formed external front was strongly saturated with artillery weapons and, first and foremost, antitank weapons.

Rifle corps which occupied the external front were subordinated to the commanders of the tank armies in order to facilitate the organization of effective command and control. All these measures permitted the immediate creation of an extraordinarily firm and stable defense, especially antitank, along the external front. Despite the fact that the enemy concentrated from four to eight panzer divisions, he failed to penetrate our defense from without, and his insignificant advance into the depth of our dispositions was usually stopped.

4. The creation of the internal encirclement ring was carried out by the combined-arms formations of the 4th Guards, 52d, and 27th Armies and the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps. These formations also basically completed the liquidation of the encircled enemy forces, although units of the tank armies also participated in the battles during the last days of this liquidation.

5. The operation was characterized by an unusual degree of maneuver. During its course, the forces of the *fronts'* shock groups were continually reinforced at the expense of other front sectors. Thus, throughout the operation the 2d Ukrainian Front's shock group forces were reinforced with the following units and formations:

- from the 57th Army: the 49th Rifle Corps' headquarters (on 29 January), the 80th Guards Rifle Division (on 29 January), the 27th Gun Artillery Brigade (on 30 January), and the 27th Separate Flame-Thrower Battalion and the 176th Flame-Thrower Company (on 30 January);
- from the 7th Guards Army: the 27th Tank Brigade (on 4 February), the 78th Guards Rifle Division (on 25 January), the 94th Guards Rifle Division (on 25 January), the 5th Engineer-Sapper Brigade (on 25 January), the 303d Rifle Division (on 31 January), the 11th Antitank [Destroyer] Artillery Brigade (on 31 January), the 41st Guards Rifle Division (on 5 February), and the 33d Rifle Corps' headquarters (on 7 February);
- from the 5th Guards Army: the 116th Rifle Division (on 13 February), the 34th Antitank [Destroyer] Artillery Brigade (on 4 February), the 110th Guards Rifle Division (on 1 February), the 84th Rifle Division (on 29 January), the 6th Guards Rifle Division (on 31 January), the 49th Light Artillery Brigade (on 1 February), and the 44th Antitank [Destroyer] Artillery Regiment (on 1 February).

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

By the end of the operation, the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front's shock group were reinforced by the 2d Tank Army in addition to units and formations from the 40th and other armies. Thus, as the operation developed, there were continuous regroupings, carried out in a timely fashion, extremely swiftly, and with great skill.

6. The operation was conducted in a tense and complex situation, one which was especially difficult for the 1st Ukrainian Front. Even before the commencement of the operation, the enemy had displayed considerable activity along the Uman' and Vinnitsa axes, having committed large tank groupings into battle. This required great attentiveness and skillful maneuver of forces and weaponry on the part of the 1st Ukrainian Front commander. Subsequently, the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front themselves went over to the offensive and, on 5 February, captured the towns of Lutsk and Rovno and, on 11 February, the town of Shepetovka. Thus, the operation to liquidate the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping did not delay our forces' victorious advance westward.

7. The operation to defeat and destroy the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping was conducted using advanced methods of maneuver tactics. The surprise and destructiveness of attacks, the swiftness of actions, the mobility of regroupings, the stubbornness in the defense, and the persistence on the offensive characterized the actions of our troops and officers. This operation once again demonstrated the high level of military expertise on the part of our generals and officers and the superiority of Stalin's military art over the stereotypical military art of the German General Staff.

NOTE

1. From 27 February, the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command transferred subordination of the 27th Army to the 2d Ukrainian Front.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

2
German Defensive Battles in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Region

GROUPING OF ENCIRCLED FORCES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENEMY DEFENSE

Grouping of forces (see Map 6)

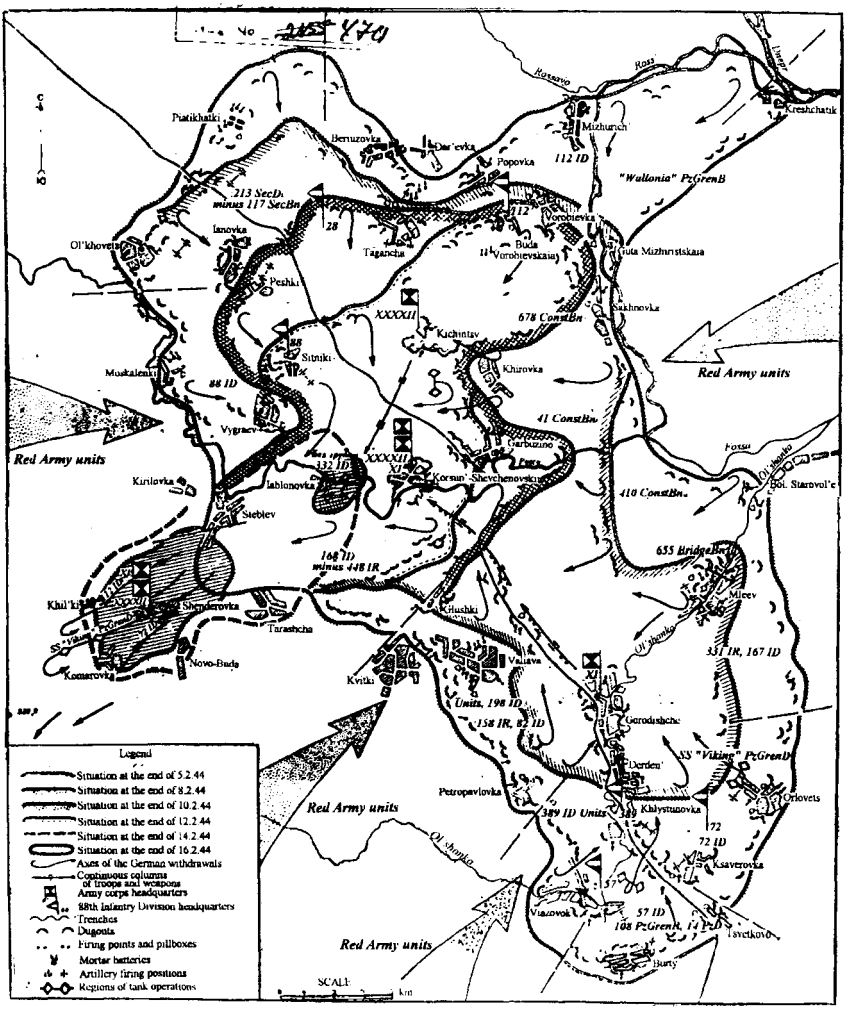
By the end of 3 February 1944, the forces of the 2d and 1st Ukrainian Fronts had completed the encirclement of the enemy's XI and XXXXII Army Corps of the Eighth German Army in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region. Artillery General Stemmerman, the XI Corps commander, was assigned to command the encircled grouping.

There were 10 divisions and 1 brigade in the encircled grouping, including 8 infantry divisions (the 112th, 88th, 168th, 167th, 82d, 57th, 72d, and 332d), 1 panzer division (SS 'Viking'), 1 security division (the 213th), and 1 SS panzer grenadier brigade ('Wallonia'). In addition, separate units of the 198th and 389th Infantry Divisions, and also the 14th Panzer Division's 108th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the 108th Artillery Regiment (from the High Command Reserve), the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 52d Mortar Regiment, the 228th Assault Gun Battalion, the 842d and 848th Heavy Artillery Battalions (from the High Command Reserve), the 410th and 678th Construction Battalions, the 41st and 655th Bridge Battalions, and the 276th Antiaircraft Battalion were also in the encirclement.

Units of the 112th Infantry and 213th Security Divisions were defending the northern and northwestern internal encirclement ring. The forward edge of the main defensive belt ran along the southern bank of the Ross' River, the northern outskirts of Mizhirich', the northwestern outskirts of Popovka, and the eastern outskirts of Berkozovka and Piatikhatki.

The defense's right flank rested on the Dnepr River. The southern (commanding) bank of the Ross' River, with its swampy bed, was well suited for the defense. Further to the west, the forward edge of the defense ran along the hills that dominated the terrain which lay forward of them. The main strong points in the northern sector of the front were Popovka, Potashnia, Beriuzovka, and

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 6. Defensive battle of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, 3–17 February 1944

Piatikhatki. The populated points of Vorobievka, Buda-Vorobievskaia, and Tagancha were prepared as strong points in the depth of the defense. The forest south and southeast of Potashnia was converted into a powerful center of resistance with a large number of firing positions, wooden barriers, and minefields.

Units of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division, the SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade, the 72d Infantry Division, the 167th Infantry Division's 331st Infantry Regiment, and rear service units from the XI and XXXXII Corps (the 678th and

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

410th Construction Battalions, and the 41st and 655th Bridge Battalions) were defending on the east of the encircled grouping. The left flank of the forward edge of the main defensive belt rested on the Dnepr River in the Kreshchatik region. Further to the south and southeast, it ran along the large forested areas to Guta Mizhiritskaia, then along the western bank of the Ross' and Fossa Rivers, and through Bol'shoe Starosel'e, Orlovets, and Tsvetkovo Station. The presence along the forward edge of a number of swamps, swampy forested areas, and the Ol'shanka, Ross', and Fossa Rivers contributed to the creation of a firm defense, especially antitank, in this sector of the front. The defense was created in the form of separate strong points and ambushes along routes of movement. The most significant strong points in the area were Kreshchatik, Sakhnovka, and Orlovets, all of which were well prepared in an engineer sense. Firing points often had heavy cover and had a great number of trenches, communications trenches, and dug-outs. Mleev was a powerful strong point in the defensive depth. Here, together with continuous trenches and pillboxes, there were barbed-wire obstacles, mine-fields, and escarpments. Alternate positions were outfitted along the Ol'shanka River in the region of the Mleev strong point.

Units of the 57th, 389th, 82d, 198th, and 168th Infantry Divisions were defending on the south and southwest of the encircled forces. The forward edge of the defense ran along the line of Tsvetkovo, Burty, Viazovok, Petropavlovka, and the hills east of Kvitki and north of Tarashcha. This sector had the greatest concentration of men and firing means [weaponry]. The very rugged terrain and the great number of large populated areas, which often extended several kilometers, contributed to the creation of a firm defense with a large quantity of field engineer structures. The system of the large, mutually flanking strong points of Tsvetkovo, Burty, Viazovok, and Khlystunovka was the most powerful center of resistance in the encircled grouping's entire sector. The large number of *balkas* [ravines] and streams with abrupt banks running from north to south made it easier for the Germans to create a strong antitank defense in the region. The Germans also turned the populated areas in the depth of this sector, which stretched in a continuous line along both banks of the Ol'shanka River (Derden' and Gorodishche), and the populated points of Valiava and Glushki into powerful strong points. Firing positions for artillery, mortars, and antitank guns were prepared behind the railroad embankment in the Tsvetkovo, Gorodishche, and Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii sector; tanks and assault guns, prepared for counterattacks, were also sheltered here.

Units of the 88th Infantry Division and the 213th Security Division were defending along the western flank of the encircled grouping. The forward edge of the defense ran along the eastern bank of the Ross' River. The principal strong points along the forward edge of this sector were Ol'khovets, Moskalenki, and Steblev. The most fortified strong points in the defensive depth were Ianovka, Peshki, Sitniki, and Vygraev, along with the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii center of resistance.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

All divisions and rear service units and subunits which had fallen into encirclement were defending in the first line. Separate units (the 332d Infantry Division, combined into a combat group; the SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade; and separate battalions from the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division and the 389th Infantry Division) were brought up into the second line to function as a reserve for the commander of the encircled group. Their presence in the reserve was, however, short-term, since our forces' continuous offensive action forced General Stemmerman to send these extremely limited reserves to liquidate the threat of penetration of the defense at this or that sector of the front.

On 3 February the average operational density [of the defense] was 20 kilometers per division. The greatest density was created to the south of the encircled grouping, in the Gorodishche salient; here the defensive frontage for a division was an average of 10–14 kilometers. At the moment of complete encirclement, the main artillery and tank grouping was also in the south, in the region south of Gorodishche.

The concentration of the main infantry forces and equipment in the south of the encircled grouping is explained by the fact that here the distance between the internal and external encirclement rings was the shortest. Furthermore, in this very region, from a position southwest of Shpola (see Map 5), the first attempt was made by the German command of the southern army group to relieve the encircled forces by means of an attack to the north by three panzer divisions (the 11th, 13th, and 14th). At first, the commander of the encircled grouping also planned to break out of the encirclement ring by means of an attack to the south by four divisions (the SS 'Viking', the 57th, 72d, and 389th). During an interrogation, prisoner-of-war Ober-Lieutenant Wolf Friedrich Wilhelm stated the following about this matter:

> Immediately after receiving reports about the encirclement, General Stemmerman, the commander of the XI Corps, ordered the corps to concentrate south of Gorodishche. It was also planned to bring forward to this region units of the XXXXII Army Corps, which was operating north of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, in order to penetrate the encirclement ring by a strike toward the south with this combined force.

Stemmerman, however, failed to carry out his decision on penetrating the encirclement ring. Our forces defeated the Germans' Gorodishche grouping in four—five days by means of powerful attacks from the east and south-west, which increased the gap between the lines of the external front and the encircled forces by up to 40 kilometers.

Having attached great significance to the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient, which was a very favorable region for delivering a flank attack against the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces, the Germans concentrated a large quantity of personnel and combat equipment in the region. The desire to hold on to this region, no

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

matter what, resulted in the fact that a considerable portion of the concentrated forces and weapons were encircled.

In accordance with the state of affairs on 3 February, the encircled German grouping numbered around 75,000 soldiers and officers, 1,700 machine-guns, 1, 100 guns (including 108 self-propelled), 540 mortars, and 270 tanks and assault guns. The presence of such considerable forces and weaponry made it possible for the Germans to create an adequately firm defense in the encirclement ring.

Characteristics of the enemy defense

The defense of the encircled grouping basically consisted of a system of powerful strong points and centers of resistance. For this purpose, the German command exploited the dense network of populated points, hills, and forested areas. Fully confident that it would receive assistance from without, the command of the encircled forces did not spare forces and weaponry to hold out and gain time until the approach of the three panzer divisions which Hitler had promised. Pillboxes, trenches, dug-outs, blindages, and various types of obstacles were built during both day and night. All the remaining population and forces, without exception, were enlisted in this effort. The Germans prepared the terrain well in an engineer sense in a relatively short time.

The presence of a great number of streams, gullies with sheer banks, and rivers contributed to the Germans' organization of a strong antitank defense along the forward edge and in the depth of the encirclement.

In many sectors of the front the approaches to the forward edge of the main defensive belt were sown with anti-personnel and antitank mines. The German command of the southern army group did not spare mines for the encircled forces and dropped large quantities of them, as well as ammunition, from aircraft. Mines were emplaced everywhere, most often haphazardly and without adequate camouflage.

Barbed-wire obstacles were emplaced only in separate sectors of the front, along the eastern side of the encirclement ring and in separate strong points. The principal barbed-wire obstacles were spiral Bruno [concertina], barbed-wire entanglements with stakes or iron bars, chevaux-de-frise, and, less often, 'German fences'.

Full-profile foxholes with communications trenches were prepared along the entire forward edge and in the defensive depth at intermediate and cut-off positions. In a number of front sectors there were continuous trenches, outfitted with machine-gun platforms, compartments for riflemen and automatic weapons specialists, and foxholes for protection against shell fragments and mines.

Foxholes and continuous trenches alternated with a large number of pillboxes, which were situated primarily in populated points. Pillboxes were built with roofing made of several rows of logs and even rails, strewn with layers of earth (1–1.5 meters). A large number of blindages [emplacements] and earthen shelters were outfitted for protection against shrapnel. Cellars and basements of

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

homes in populated points were also adapted for this purpose. When cellars were used as shelters, floors were reinforced with rows of logs and a layer of earth or stone.

The entire length of the railroad embankment from Tsvetkovo Station to Ianovka represented a sort of second defensive line, having been transformed into a continuous system of field engineer structures. Foxholes, slit trenches for riflemen, and machine-gun platforms were dug out here, observation posts were outfitted, and antitank guns, mortars, and infantry weapons, which had been designated for direct firing, were also dug in.

The banks of the Ross' and Ol'shanka Rivers, which also had a large number of engineer structures, were used as cut-off positions in the defensive depth.

The firing positions for heavy infantry weapons (mortars, heavy machine-guns, and antitank guns) were prepared from 500 to 1,200 meters from the forward edge of the defense. Guns and mortars were entrenched in pits and camouflaged as much as possible to fit in with the surrounding terrain. Antitank slit trenches were dug out for teams in the vicinity of the guns and mortars, and dug-outs were prepared from 50 to 100 meters from each firing position.

Artillery firing positions were usually located behind natural barriers which blocked the access to tanks. In a number of front sectors, guns were also entrenched in pits, in whose vicinity were platforms for conducting direct fire. Each artillery battery was prepared in an engineer respect for all-round defense.

Observation posts (artillery and combined-arms) with covered emplacements and communications trenches were positioned along the outskirts of populated points (in orchards, on roofs), on the slopes of hills, and in haystacks. As a rule, regimental and divisional command posts were situated on the outskirts of populated points. Stone basements were adapted for this purpose, or dug-outs with heavy covering were prepared. Command posts had all-round defense and were outfitted as strong points, with engineer structures, antitank guns, and heavy infantry weapons.

COMBAT OPERATIONS OF THE ENCIRCLED ENEMY GROUPING

General course of combat operations

The Germans fiercely resisted our offensive by creating a large number of engineer structures and by clutching at every meter of territory. The command of the encircled forces organized and conducted a large number of counterattacks, while maneuvering first-line subunits, units, and 'combat groups' created during battle from the remnants of defeated divisions. For example, in only three days a combat group of the 332d Infantry Division was shifted several times from one front sector to another. At first it operated in the south, in the Tsvetkovo region, and then it was transferred north to assist the 213th Security Division in the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Ianovka region; it conducted a counterattack jointly with the 88th Infantry Division's 188th Fusilier Battalion in the direction of Vygraev, and was then transferred to counterattack in the Glushki region, etc. Units of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division were also shifted frequently. At the moment of encirclement it was defending in the region of the hills east of Orlovets; several days later it was shifted to the Arbuzino region with the mission of stopping our offensive; and two days later it attacked in the direction of Novo-Buda. The SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade and units and subunits of the 57th, 72d, and 198th Infantry Divisions were shifted several times from one sector to another.

The Germans conducted their fiercest and most numerous counterattacks in the Dar'evka, Potashnia, Vygraev, Kirilovka, Tarashcha, Glushki, Gorodishche, Viazovok, and Burty regions. The counterattacks were usually conducted in from infantry company to infantry battalion strength with support by tanks and assault guns, and, in case of failure, they repeated the attacks several times along the same axis. Thus, for example, on 11 February six counterattacks were conducted in the Arbuzino region and three in the Glushki region.

Pressed in from all directions, the Germans employed all possible means to try to stop our offensive, while waiting for the promised assistance and delaying their ultimate annihilation. But nothing came of this—the Germans could not settle firmly into any intermediate defensive position. Our forces enveloped these positions from the flanks and created the threat of dismemberment of the encircled grouping's main forces. The Germans were forced to withdraw continuously, and the 'cauldron' became increasingly compressed.

By 8 February our units that were advancing in the south had driven the Germans from the strong points of Burty, Viazovok, Khlystunovka, Petropavlovka, and Valiava. The same occurred in the north of the encircled grouping. Here, by the end of 7 February the Germans had been forced to abandon Kreshchatik, Mizhurich', Popovka, Potashnia, and Piatikhatki. By 10 February the encirclement ring had diminished from 1,500 square kilometers to 450 square kilometers, and by 15 February the Germans were occupying only three populated points, covering a territory of 18 square kilometers.

Ober-Lieutenant Witzer Erbin, a captured physician from the 57th Infantry Division's sapper [combat-engineer battalion], attested to the continuous German withdrawal to the center of the encircled grouping and the anticipated assistance from without:

> The sapper battalion was attached to the 57th Infantry Division's 199th Regiment and by 3 February had occupied a defense 0.5 kilometers south of Burty. An order was received from division headquarters, which informed us that units of three panzer divisions would be breaking through to us from the south in no more than 48 hours, and that we had to hold out until then, no matter what. On 4 February, however, the Russian infantry unexpectedly (for us) captured the western outskirts of Burty, and we were forced to withdraw quickly to Petropavlovka and take up a defense there.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Once again, we received an order that panzer divisions moving from the west to relieve us would be breaking through in three or four days, and that it was necessary to defend our occupied positions steadfastly.

The Petropavlovka region could not be successfully defended for a long period. The Russian infantry and tanks penetrated the defense and occupied the grove southwest of Petropavlovka. Our regiment was forced out of our occupied positions, and it took up the defense on the northeastern outskirts of Valiava; by this time the Russians had occupied the southwestern part of this area. We were able to hold out in Valiava for only one day, and, on 11 February, having suffered heavy losses in personnel and weapons, we withdrew to the Koshmak region (four kilometers southeast of Korsun'-S he vchenko vskii).

Unable to withstand the Russian onslaught, on 12 February we withdrew to new positions, and, on the next day, in view of their disadvantages, we occupied a defense in the Iablonovka region with our front facing to the northeast. We were unable, however, to deploy for the defense, since Russian tanks and infantry had occupied the grove 2 kilometers south of Iablonovka, and once again we were forced to withdraw to new positions. By the evening of 14 February, our regiment was again forced from our occupied positions, and, when the Russians occupied Tarashcha, the remnants of the 57th Infantry Division withdrew to Shenderovka. By this time nothing remained of the sapper battalion, and there were no more than 40–50 men in the 199th Infantry Regiment; all the others were either killed or taken prisoner.

The German Army's Supreme Command did not discontinue its attempts to relieve the encircled forces by means of an attack by three panzer divisions from the region southwest of Shpola. At the beginning of February, it created a tank group consisting of the 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions and the 'Adolf Hitler' Panzer Division along the Uman' axis in the region north of Buki (Map 5).

On 4 February the enemy launched an offensive northward from the Konstantinovka and Roskoshevka line. During the first days of the offensive, the enemy grouping achieved some success; for example, during the period from 4 through 6 February, it succeeded in advancing 15–20 kilometers and capturing the populated areas of Votylevka, Kosiakovka, and Kuchkovka. Subsequently, intensive fighting continued, and, as a result, the enemy was driven out of a number of populated points.

On 9 February the enemy's 1st Panzer Division concentrated in the Buki region, and the direction of the subsequent offensive changed. Now they planned to deliver the main attack to penetrate the external encirclement ring along the Lysianka axis. Having concentrated a large number of tanks in a narrow front sector, the German command wanted to penetrate our front, relieve the encircled grouping, and then, while co-operating with units of the 11th, 13th, and 14th Panzer Divisions (which had regrouped into the Ekaterinopol' region), to

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

encircle our units, which were developing the offensive toward Uman'. Simultaneously, General Stemmerman was ordered to concentrate the encircled forces in the region west of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii with the mission of breaking out of encirclement to the west in the direction of Oktiabr' and Lysianka.

On the morning of 11 February, after a strong artillery preparation supported by large aviation forces and protected from the north in the Votylevka region by the units of the 16th Panzer Division, the Germans launched the offensive. The main forces of the three panzer divisions were deployed along a line south of Vinograd and Rizino and attacked in a north-easterly direction toward Lysianka and Chesnovka.

Thanks to the numerical superiority, especially in tanks, created in the narrow front sector, the Germans succeeded in penetrating our defense and occupying Lysianka. And, in fact, this exhausted the strength of their counterstroke. All subsequent German attempts to penetrate further east from Lysianka were unsuccessful. Our forces successfully repelled their attacks, and the Germans suffered enormous losses in tanks and personnel. The well-thought-out German High Command counterstroke to relieve the encircled grouping was thwarted by the stubborn resistance of 1st Ukrainian Front units. By 16 February the crack German panzer divisions, fearful of being cut off and encircled in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region, just as the forces they were sent to relieve, were forced to withdraw quickly west-ward from the Lysianka salient, beyond the Gornyi Tikich River. Thus, the encircled forces, headed by General Stemmerman, were left to their own resources.

Operations of the encircled forces

Simultaneously with the preparation of the counterstroke by units of the 1st, 16th, and 17th Panzer Divisions and the SS 'Adolf Hitler' Panzer Division from the region north of Buki in the direction of Lysianka, the commander of the encircled forces regrouped and prepared an attack to the southwest from the Steblev and Tarashcha line. To this end, the XI Army Corps was ordered to withdraw from the Gorodishche salient to the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region. This order was also necessitated by the fact that our units which were advancing from the region northwest of Bol'shoe Starosel'e and from the direction of Kvitki and Valiava had created a real threat of cutting off the XI Corps units, which were defending in the Gorodishche salient, from the remaining German grouping.

The withdrawal of the XI Corps from the Gorodishche region to the north under continuous attacks by our forces was extremely disorganized. Formations and units criss-crossed one another and became intermingled. All roads were blocked by carts, motor vehicles, and abandoned guns. Dead bodies were scattered everywhere. The troops were moving in a continuous disorganized mass. Bottlenecks were formed at every bridge, defile, and crossing. Troop

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

control was completely lost. The panic was intensified by the fact that our tanks were close at the heels of the withdrawing units, and artillery was firing on the entire Gorodishche salient. Our massed air raids against the troop columns turned them into a fleeing mass of men, horses, and vehicles scattering in all directions.

With regard to the withdrawal from the Gorodishche salient, prisoner-of-war Ober-Lieutenant Wolf Friedrich Wilhelm pointed out the following:

> Field Marshal Manstein, the commander of Army Group South, proposed his plan for relieving the encircled forces to Hitler. According to this plan, the XI Army Corps was to be concentrated in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region so as to link up with units of the XXXXII Corps and liquidate the impending threat that the encircled group would be chopped up. Subsequently, it was proposed that these two corps would jointly attack to the southwest and break out of encirclement.
>
> Hitler approved Manstein's plan and by radio ordered General Stemmerman to execute it. Consequently, the XI Corps was ordered to withdraw to the north. During the withdrawal from the Gorodishche salient, we suffered heavy losses in men and equipment. Russian pressure was very strong, adding to the exceptional chaos, disorder, and lack of co-ordination in our actions. Thus, for example, on 30 January, by virtue of an order from the Eighth Army headquarters transmitted through the authorized transport officer, the entire railroad line from Tsvetkovo to Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, including the railroad bridge, was destroyed, without co-ordinating with General Stemmerman. A large train loaded with fuel and food was even blown up in the Tsvetkovo region.
>
> Such senseless action on the part of the Eighth Army headquarters and the military railroad administration placed the XI Corps' forces in an exceptionally difficult position. We were deprived of our principal route. In view of the approaching thaw and the lack of roads, a large portion of our motor vehicle transport and many guns were left on the roads during the withdrawal. All detours, especially those in the region of the railroad bridge near Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii which had been blown up, could be used only by animal-drawn transport and individual motor vehicles towed by tractors. The enormous pile-up of vehicles formed bottlenecks, while, at the same time, more vehicles and troops continued to arrive. The threat of the advancing Russians capturing all motor vehicle transport and materiel was created.
>
> In light of this, Stemmerman ordered the destruction of everything that could not be taken away. In addition to all of this, the continuous bombing and Russian artillery shelling from three directions created complete chaos among our withdrawing forces. Motor vehicle transport and guns, comprising a continuous column in several rows, were either burned, demolished, or blown up from Gorodishche to Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, a

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

distance of 15–20 kilometers. It is impossible to determine the number of soldiers and officers who were killed; bodies were scattered everywhere.

On 10 February the headquarters of the XI Corps arrived in Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii. A radiogram was received from Field Marshal Manstein, which said that the III Panzer Corps was coming to the rescue in the direction of Lysianka. The commander of this corps, General of Tank Forces Breith, also reported by radio, 'After repelling strong enemy attacks, the III Panzer Corps once again launched an offensive. Whatever delay there might be, we will come, no matter what. General Breith.' By this time, the forward units of our forces which were advancing from the northwest had reached Kichintsy, and units advancing from the southeast were engaged in battle 2 kilometers southeast of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii.

The commander of the encircled grouping hurriedly created a shock group to attack from the Steblev and Tarashcha line in the direction of Lysianka to meet the Germans' III Panzer Corps, which was advancing from the west. The shock group consisted of the 112th Infantry Division (taken from the northern sector of the encirclement ring) and the 72d Infantry Division, reinforced by a panzer battalion from the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division, the 'Germany' Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and the SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade. Prisoners indicated that these units had been given the following missions:

- the 112th Infantry Division, while advancing in the direction of Steblev and Khil'ki, was to capture Khizhintsy and link up with units from the SS 'Adolf Hitler' Panzer Division;
- the 'Germany' Panzer Grenadier Regiment was to capture Shenderovka;
- the 72d Infantry Division was to capture Novo-Buda and Komarovka, and link up with units from the 1st and 17th Panzer Divisions in the Oktiabr' and Lysianka region; and
- the SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade was to advance behind the 72d Infantry Division's left flank, while protecting the shock group's operations from the south.

At 2400 hours on 12 February, these German groupings went over to the offensive, and by 1300 hours on 14 February they had succeeded in capturing the populated points of Khil'ki, Komarovka, Novo-Buda, Shenderovka, and Tarashcha. However, the Germans were unable to advance beyond these points. Our forces also successfully repelled their numerous attacks on 14 and 15 February designed to advance further southwest.

Ober-Lieutenant Wolf Friedrich Wilhelm later pointed out:

> On 15 February it became clear that the III Panzer Corps was not able to advance further than Lysianka, and that we would have to break out of the encirclement using our own forces. A large quantity of ammunition was

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

dropped for us from transport aircraft. An order followed concerning the destruction of all motor vehicles and carts which were not loaded with ammunition. All staff documents and personal effects of the officers were destroyed. All XI Corps staff officers were gathered into one combat group, which constituted nearly a company. General Stemmerman took over the command of this company. He announced that, in light of the existing situation, we could not remain encircled, and we ourselves had to break out to the west.

On the night of 16 February and during that day, the forces were regrouped and concentrated in the Shenderovka region to break out of encirclement in the direction of Lysianka on the night of 17 February. The combat formation of these forces was structured in several echelons. The 72d and 112th Infantry Divisions and the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division were in the first echelon. Directly behind the units of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division and under the protection of assault guns and automatic weapons followed the command of the encircled grouping, formation staffs, and the officer cadre up to regimental commanders inclusive. Carts with wounded and medical organizations followed behind the staffs and officers.

All remaining units and subunits of the encircled forces moved in the second echelon. Protection from the north and east was provided by the 88th Infantry Division, and from the south the penetrating group was protected by units of the 57th Infantry Division.

The plan called for the breakout from the encirclement to take place on a front 4.5 kilometers wide. The 112th Infantry Division was to advance on the right flank in the direction of Khil'ki and Khizhintsy and, subsequently, to link up with their forces. The SS 'Viking' Panzer Division was prepared to advance in the center, north of Komarovka, Hill 239.0, and Lysianka, in the direction of Shenderovka; this division's combat formation was also structured in several echelons. A fusilier battalion, reinforced with tanks and assault guns, was moving in front; behind it was the 'Westland' Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade, the 'Narva' Battalion, and the 'Germany' Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The 72d Infantry Division was to advance on the left, through Komarovka toward Lysianka.

Having concentrated large forces in a narrow front sector, Stemmerman counted on assistance from the remaining defeated divisions by means of surprise night operations to penetrate our front and to bring the senior officer cadre and staffs out of the encirclement. He did not, however, succeed in accomplishing this.

On the night of 17 February, the preparation of the encircled enemy forces to penetrate the front, and especially the offensive operations themselves, took place under conditions of frightful disorder and confusion. One of the prisoners-of-war, Captain Hans Breiting, the commander of the 157th Artillery Regiment's

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

5th Battalion (of the 57th Infantry Division), described the situation during the attempt to break out of the encirclement ring as follows:

> By the evening of 16 February, all formations of the XI and XXXXII Army Corps were concentrated in the Shenderovka region in order to break out of encirclement. An order from the division commander, Major General Tropitz, was read at the headquarters of the 157th Artillery Regiment, which stated that, on the night of 17 February, a breakout from the encirclement ring would occur and that we are protecting the breakout from the south. Each of the [artillery] battalions would accompany the infantry regiments. The order was to destroy all that was unnecessary. According to the sketch attached to the order, our route was through Shenderovka toward Lysianka. My battalion's guns occupied firing positions among the carts, which had blocked the entire populated point of Shenderovka, against which the Russians were conducting strong artillery fire. The advance of the first-echelon units was delayed until the morning of 17 February, and the 676th Infantry Regiment and my battalion set out from the western outskirts of Shenderovka only at 1200 hours on 17 February.
>
> The main road turned out to be blocked by transport which had stopped or had been damaged, and it was impossible to move along it. I saw an enormous number of dead Germans in the small sector of the road toward Lysianka. The large number of carts blocked not only the roads but also the fields, and they could not move any farther.

The offensive operations by all of the encircled grouping's other units and formations also took place under similar conditions. Thus, prisoner-of-war Ober Lieutenant Wolf Friedrich Wilhelm indicated the following:

> Our offensive from the Shenderovka region commenced at 2300 hours on 16 February, and, in my opinion, no one broke out of encirclement. I left Shenderovka on a cart on the morning of 17 February. All roads were blocked by transport, and all around there was unbelievable disorder; everything was confused, everyone was running in one general flow, and no one knew where he was running or why. Damaged vehicles, guns, carts, and the dead bodies of hundreds of soldiers and officers were scattered on and off the roads.
>
> Tens of other officers and soldier prisoners-of-war provided their impressions concerning the attempts to break out of the encirclement ring and the results of these attempts. All, however, said that chaos and disorganization reigned during these attempts, and that this, to a significant degree, accelerated the final defeat of the encircled German grouping.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Results

As a result of the fierce battles which endured for 14 days, our forces completed the operation to destroy the encircled enemy grouping in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region. The Germans suffered enormous losses during the battles. They left more than 52,000 dead on the battlefield, 11,000 soldiers and officers were taken prisoner, and all the equipment of the encircled forces was destroyed or captured by our forces.

It should be noted that enemy losses are not fully reflected in these data. Thus, during the attempt to penetrate the encirclement ring from without, 20,000 German soldiers and officers were killed, and a large quantity of combat weaponry, in particular 329 airplanes, more than 600 tanks, and more than 500 guns, was also lost. The liquidation of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient destroyed the threat of a flank attack against the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces, which were deployed west of Kiev.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

3
Combat Operations of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cavalry Corps in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

CAVALRY CORPS OPERATIONS DURING THE ENCIRCLEMENT

Assignment of missions (see Map 7)

The 5th Guards Don Red Army Cossack Cavalry Corps, which consisted of the 11th and 12th Guards and 63d Cavalry Divisions, arrived at the Znamenka Station region on 20 January 1944 after a 20-day march from the Kakhovka region. Here it became part of the 2d Ukrainian Front. The corps was situated in the *front* reserve until 25 January, and, while deployed in the Tsvetna, Tsibulevo, Znamenka, and Dmitrovka region, it brought its units into order and prepared for the forthcoming offensive operations.

According to the operational plan, after penetration of the enemy defense by the rifle formations of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies, the cavalry corps' formations were to be committed into the penetration directly behind the tank units of the 5th Guards Tank Army. Based on this plan, by 0700 hours on 26 January, in accordance with an order from the *front* command, the corps was to advance to the penetration sector and occupy the following positions:

- the 11th Guards Cavalry Division in the Iurchikha, Nesvatkova, and Aleksandrovka region;
- the 12th Guards Cavalry Division in the Tomashevka region; and
- the 63d Cavalry Division in the Bondyrevo and Golikovo region.

The Corps headquarters was located in Bondyrevo.

By this time, the main forces of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies, which on the morning of 25 January had gone over to the offensive, had penetrated the enemy defense to a depth of 12–16 kilometers and had reached the Ekaterinovka, Kapitanovka, and Tishkovka line. The 5th Guards Tank Army, which had been committed into the penetration, used its first-echelon corps to capture Zhurovka and Turiia.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Upon its arrival at the Iurchikha, Tomashevka, and Bondyrevo region, the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps was reinforced by the 3d Antitank [Destroyer] Artillery Brigade and received the following mission: after units of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies had reached the Kutsovka, Zhurovka, and Novomirgorod line, it [the cavalry corps] was to concentrate in the Makeevka region, after which it was to reach the enemy's rear area by means of a surprise attack from the Makeevka and Zhurovka line, and, while developing a swift offensive in the general direction of Mar'ianovka, Tereshki, and Ol'shana, it was to destroy enemy personnel and equipment, smash the rear service areas, and disrupt command and control.

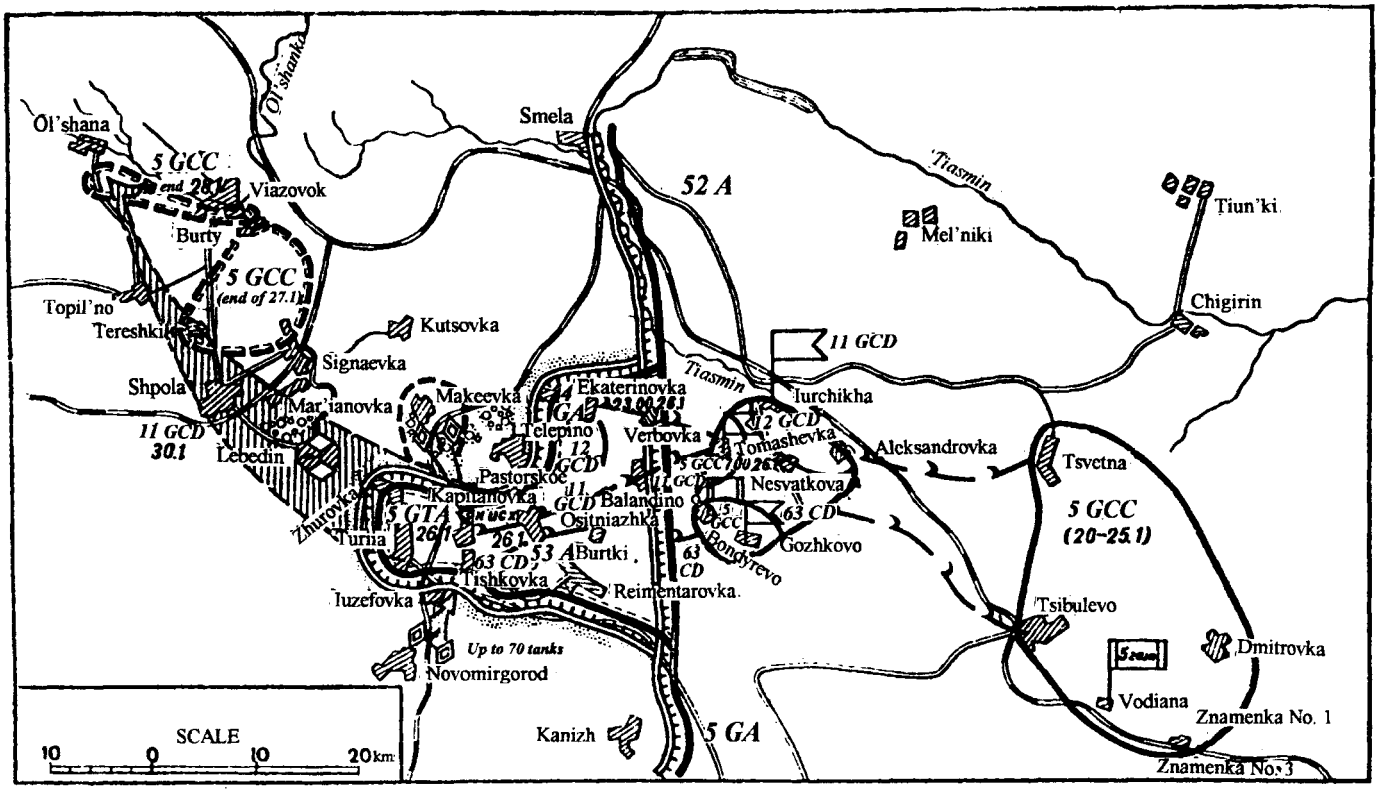
The principal aim of the corps' operations was to co-operate with the units of the 5th Guards Tank Army and the 1st Ukrainian Front and to prevent the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping from withdrawing to the south. On 27 January the cavalry corps was to reach the Burty, Tereshki, and Signaevka region, and, by day's end on 28 January, the Ol'shana region in order to intercept the enemy's paths of withdrawal in the Viazovok and Ol'shana sector.

While fulfilling the *front* commander's order, at 2000 hours on 26 January, the cavalry corps' formations began their march, and, by 2300 hours, the 12th and 63d Cavalry Divisions, moving in the first echelon, reached the Telepino and Burtki line. The corps' second echelon (the 11th Cavalry Division) was still in the Tomashevka region. At this time, in connection with the successes of our forces advancing in the direction of Kapitanovka and Zhurovka (10 kilometers south of the region designated for the concentration of the cavalry corps), the *front* commander changed the direction of the corps' movement somewhat. Specifically, the corps' formations were to turn to the southwest and reach the Zhurovka, Turiia, and Kapitanovka region, after which they were to exploit the offensive in the direction of Shpola, Topil'no, and Ol'shana.

In order to turn the direction of the corps' movement, the 11th Guards Cavalry Division swiftly began to advance toward Ositniazhka, and the 63d Cavalry Division toward Tishkovka. The 12th Guards Cavalry Division was halted, but, after the 11th Guards Cavalry Division had reached the Kapitanovka region, it [the 12th Cavalry Division] began to move towards Ositniazhka. Thus, after the corps had completed its turn to the southwest, its first echelon consisted of the 11th Guards and 63d Cavalry Divisions; and the 12th Guards Cavalry Division occupied a position in the second echelon, behind the 11th Guards Cavalry Division.

The successful operations of our rifle formations in the Kapitanovka region were supported by the tank corps of the 5th Tank Army, which, having occupied Zhurovka by the close of 26 January and meeting little resistance from the Germans, began to advance swiftly in the direction of Lebedin and Shpola. However, the enemy, having transferred during the night around 50 tanks from the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division in the north and around 70 tanks from the 14th Panzer Division (with infantry and artillery) in the south, launched a

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 7. Missions and arrival of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cossack Cavalry Corps in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

counteroffensive on the morning of 27 January and occupied Kapitanovka and Tishkovka.

Thus, by means of flank counterattacks, the enemy succeeded in closing the passage, which had been formed during the penetration in the Kapitanovka region, and isolating our infantry and tank units which had passed through it. A difficult situation ensued for the cavalry corps. German infantry and automatic weapons detachments, supported by artillery, mortars, and tank groups, had occupied the Pastorskoe, Kapitanovka, and Tishkovka line and blocked the cavalry corps' path. To execute its mission, the corps had to penetrate the newly created enemy defense independently.

Penetration of the enemy defense in the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka region (see Map 8)

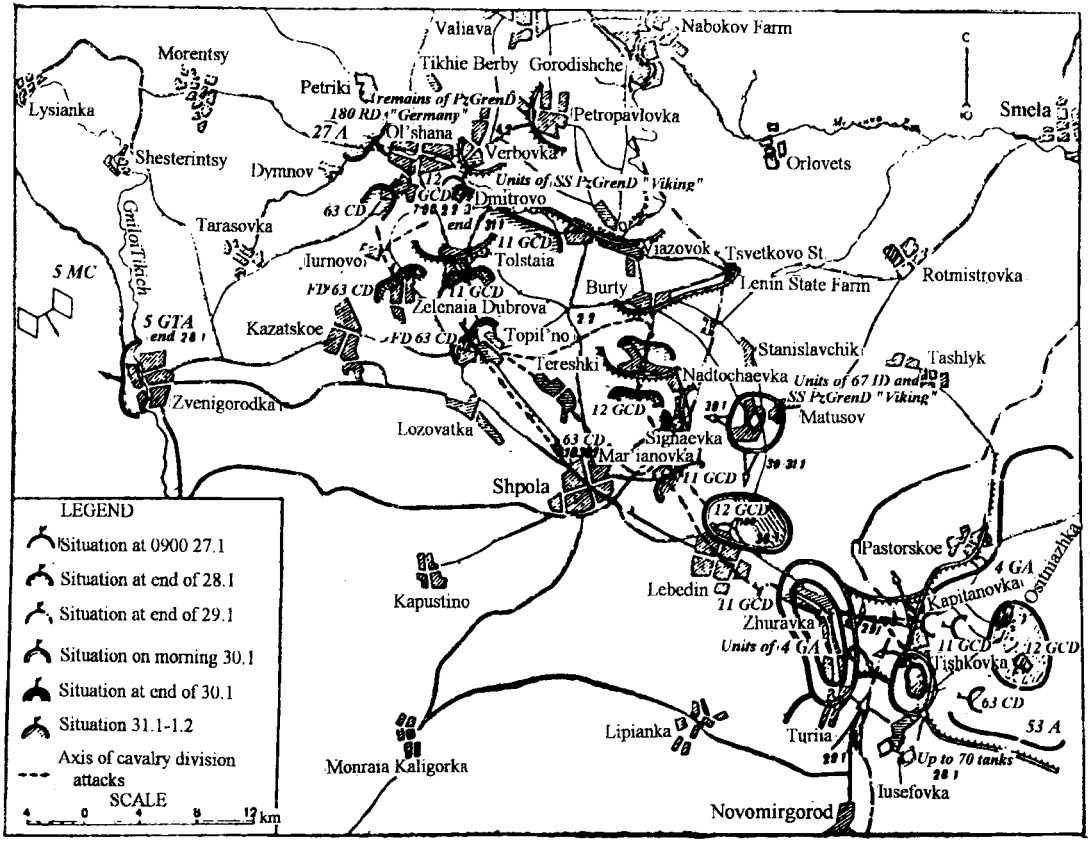
Having deployed forward from the Ositniazhka line, by 0900 hours on 27 January the units of the corps had dismounted and commenced the offensive against Kapitanovka and Tishkovka in dense fog and along terrain which was cut up by *balkas* and soaked by slush. During the entire day, corps units fought against enemy infantry and tanks and repelled his counterattacks. By 1900 hours the 11th Guards Cavalry Division units had reached the eastern out-skirts of Kapitanovka, the units of the 63d Division had reached the eastern outskirts of Tishkovka, and the second-echelon 12th Guards Cavalry Division was in Ositniazhka.

Because of poor visibility, enemy tanks approached to within 100–150 meters while firing against the cavalry combat formations. Following the tanks were groups of automatic weapons men, who successfully penetrated into the subunits' combat formations. In addition, the enemy conducted strong artillery and mortar fire from long-range guns against regions which had been ranged earlier, severed communications, and disrupted traffic along the Ositniazhka and Kapitanovka road.

As a result of the fierce combat, on the night of 28 January units of the 63d Cavalry Division succeeded in occupying Tishkovka and organizing a defense of this region. The enemy brought up fresh forces and counterattacked many times during the day. By the end of the day, a large German grouping, consisting of up to 70 tanks, 30 self-propelled guns, 20 armored vehicles, and 2–2.5 infantry battalions with artillery support, succeeded in encircling Tishkovka by means of attacks from the west and southwest. Fierce street battles turned into hand-to-hand skirmishes. Communications with Tishkovka were broken.

Throughout 28 January stubborn battles for Kapitanovka continued on the corps' right flank, and, as a result, having beaten off several strong German

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 8. Combat operations of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cossack Cavalry Corps during the encirclement of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, 26 January–3 February 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

counterattacks, by day's end the 11th Guards Cavalry Division had captured the eastern outskirts of the populated point.

Our encircled units from the 4th Guards Army were also fighting continuous, fierce battles in the Zhurovka and Turiia regions while driving back enemy counterattacks. These populated points repeatedly changed hands during the fighting. Although gradually weakening, the enemy counterattacks continued during the night of 29 January. The formations of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps, in co-operation with tanks and infantry from the 4th Guards Army, not only successfully repulsed enemy counterattacks but also inflicted heavy personnel and equipment losses on him. Convinced of the failure of their counterattacks and seeing our ever-increasing resistance, on the morning of 29 January the Germans were forced to begin withdrawing northwestward and south west ward from the Pastor skoe, Kapitanovka, and Tishkovka front.

At 1200 hours on 29 January, the 2d Ukrainian Front commander ordered the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps to shift quickly to a pursuit of the withdrawing enemy in the general direction of Zhurovka, Lebedin, Shpola, and Lozovatka. To execute this order, the corps commander assigned the following missions:

- the 63d Cavalry Division was to initiate pursuit of the enemy from the northern part of Tishkovka, and, while destroying his forces in the Shpola and Lozovatka region, [it was] to capture Kazatskoe by the end of 29 January;
- the 11th Guards Cavalry Division was to pursue and destroy the enemy from the southern part of Kapitanovka in the direction of Zhurovka, Lebedin, and Tereshki, and to capture Zelenaia Dubrova by the close of 29 January; and
- the 12th Guards Cavalry Division was to reach the Kapitanovka region and move into the second echelon in readiness to exploit success from behind the 63d Division's right flank.

By 1700 hours on 29 January, the 11th Guards Cavalry Division had passed Zhurovka. The remaining corps' formations halted in their previous positions, while the 63d Cavalry Division continued to repel enemy tank and infantry counterattacks from the Iuzefovka region in yet another attempt to close the penetration east of Kapitanovka by an attack to the north. By 2000 hours on 29 January, the corps' headquarters had arrived at the northwestern outskirts of Kapitanovka.

Despite the enemy's desperate attempts to liquidate the penetration, the general course of our operation had developed successfully. Having co-operated with the infantry, artillery, and cavalry in repelling the enemy counterattacks, the 5th Guards Tank Army had successfully continued to develop the penetration, and, having reached operational space, had penetrated deeply into the enemy's defense. By the end of 28 January, its forward units had already reached Zvenigorodka, where they linked up with tank units of the 1st Ukrainian Front's 5th [Guards] Tank Corps.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Thus, at the same time that units of our forces at the base of the penetration were continuing to fight fiercely against the strong enemy grouping which was attempting to close the existing penetration by attacks from the north and south, the mobile units of the 2d and 1st Ukrainian Fronts had, in fact, achieved an operational encirclement of the German Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping. It was necessary to force the advance of both *fronts'* rifle units as quickly as possible so that they could form a continuous encirclement ring. In this situation the operations of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps acquired special importance. The cavalry had to enter the corridor which had formed after the penetration and, while fully exploiting its high maneuverability and cross-country capability, advance behind the tank units, widening the penetration, forming a screen across possible routes of German withdrawal, and thickening the combat formations of our tank units which had penetrated into the enemy defense, until the arrival of the infantry.

Commitment of cavalry corps into the penetration, and their arrival in the operational depths

Having repelled the enemy's counterattacks, by the end of 29 January part of the cavalry formations, together with the 2d Ukrainian Front's infantry and tanks, had formed a narrow corridor 5 kilometers wide in the Tishkovka region. This corridor was used for the commitment of the cavalry corps into the penetration.

The commitment into the penetration took place in a tense situation. Restricted in their maneuver by the narrow area, the corps' formations entered the penetration while being systematically bombed by enemy aviation. The situation became even more complex because the narrow penetration corridor was being shelled by machine-gun and artillery fire from the north and south and from the region west of Iusefovka. In addition, heavy artillery was firing [on the corridor]. The forces stretched out in a long column along the single road from Ositniazhka to Kapitanovka, which was impassable because of the mud. During the march units got mixed up and became difficult to control.

Control became even more difficult when darkness fell. Division staffs lost communications with units and did not respond to the continuous radio inquiries from the corps headquarters about the situation. In order to determine the actual situation in its units, after leaving Kapitanovka the corps headquarters set up an officer post whose mission was the registration, passage, and direction of the columns. The remaining corps staff officers were sent on foot, on horseback, and in vehicles to determine precisely the situation of the corps units and neighboring units. At first light communications officers were dispatched in Po-2 aircraft for this purpose.

By the morning of 30 January, the following was determined regarding the situation of the corps' formations. Having encountered minor German resistance, by 0800 hours the 63d Cavalry Division's forward detachment (the 220th Cavalry Regiment) had occupied Topil'no and was continuing its movement

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

through Zelenaia Dubrova toward Ol'shana. After transferring its combat sectors to the 6th Guards Rifle Division, by 0800 hours the division's main forces were moving along the Lebedin, Shpola, and Topil'no march route. By 1000 hours the units of the 11th Guards Cavalry Division were approaching the southeastern outskirts of Mar'ianovka. By 1100 hours the 12th Guards Cavalry Division had reached the forested region north of Lebedin and had halted for a two-hour rest.

Thus, despite German attempts to delay the cavalry by massed air strikes, the corps' main forces had successfully passed through the enemy's tactical defensive depth and had reached the operational depths for operations against the enemy lines of communication north of Shpola.

Enemy battle in encirclement in the Ol'shana and Verbovka region

In connection with attempts by the encircled German grouping to penetrate to the south and southwest, at 0830 hours on 30 January the corps commander issued an order which assigned the following missions:

- the 12th Guards Cavalry Division was to reach the Shpola region, after which it was to capture the Burty region and halt the enemy advance to the south, southwest, and west;
- the 11th Guards Cavalry Division was to capture the Topil'no and Tolstaia region and prevent the enemy from withdrawing southwest and to establish communications in this region with the units of the 5th Guards Tank Army; and
- the 63d Cavalry Division was to capture Ol'shana, block the enemy's path of withdrawal to the south and southwest, and establish communications with the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces, which were fighting in this region.

While executing this order, throughout 30 January the corps' units fought their way forward around 30 kilometers, and, by the end of the day, they had occupied the following position. The forward units of the 12th Guards Cavalry Division had captured Mar'ianovka and, while continuing the offensive, had reached the southern outskirts of Nadtochaevka and the western outskirts of Signaevka. Having concentrated tanks in the Matusov region, the Germans tried several times to launch counterattacks against the division employing groups of 12–17 tanks supported by infantry. Each time, however, they were thrown back with heavy losses. As a result, the Germans were forced to begin a withdrawal from the Nadtochaevka region to Burty, under cover of an armored train.

While pursuing the withdrawing enemy with its forward detachment, the 11th Guards Cavalry Division had reached and fought for possession of the population point of Tolstaia. The division's main forces were situated along the approaches to this populated area. By the end of the day, the 63d Cavalry Division's main forces had reached Topil'no. The division's forward units had reached the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Zelenaia Dubrova region, having captured prisoners and trophies in the battle. By this time, the cavalry corps' headquarters was located on the southwest outskirts of Lebedin.

The seriousness of the threat of complete encirclement of the German grouping north of the Shpola and Zvenigorodka line now became evident to the German command. While attempting to prevent closure of the encirclement ring, the Germans attempted to reach into our rear area in the Kapitanovka and Shpola sectors and to sever the lines of communication of our forces which had entered into the penetration.

On the night of 31 January, the cavalry corps repelled counterattacks by enemy units attempting to break out to the south. The cavalry corps' subsequent missions were specified by two directives from the 2d Ukrainian Front commander.

The first directive, which corps headquarters received at 0435 hours on 31 January, gave the following order:

> I order the 12th Cavalry Division's forces to destroy the enemy in the Matusov, Stanislavchik, and Burty region. Occupy Kazatskoe and Tolstaia as soon as possible and close the enemy's only passage through these points. By the morning of 31 January, co-operate with and establish communications with the 1st Ukrainian Front's units in the Ol'shana region. Maintain communications with Rotmistrov (the 5th Guards Tank Army commander), keep the enemy out of the south and southwest, and, as soon as possible, close off the enemy's route of withdrawal.

In the second directive, which was received at 1000 hours on 31 January, the *front* commander affirmed the corps' earlier assigned mission and demanded that the forces strain every nerve to defeat the encircled enemy grouping and capture his equipment decisively and without delay.

On 31 January the fighting expanded with new vigor. While holding on to the Matusov region and the center of Signaevka, the Germans' 57th Infantry Division (the 676th and 199th Infantry Regiments), the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division, and separate subunits of other broken-up divisions, together with the artillery regiment from the 389th Infantry Division, did not weaken their efforts to penetrate southward to Lebedin.

With one of its regiments protecting the flank facing toward Signaevka, the 12th Guards Cavalry Division's main forces continued the offensive toward Burty. While repulsing enemy infantry counterattacks in a strength of from one to two battalions, supported by artillery and tanks, by 1800 hours the division had penetrated to Nadtochaevka and completely cleared the enemy from this populated point.

After fighting to seize Topil'no, Tolstaia, and Dmitrovo, by day's end on 31 January the 11th Guards Cavalry Division was locked in combat in the Viazovok and Verbovka sector, faced by units of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division, the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

410th Construction Battalion, and several small cover detachments with a total strength of 2 infantry regiments, up to 10–12 artillery batteries, and up to 40 tanks.

By 1800 hours on 31 January, the two regiments of the 63d Cavalry Division reached the center of Ol'shana. Their further advance was stopped by pre-planned and well-organized enemy fire. The Germans converted each structure into a firing center; therefore, the struggle for Ol'shana became protracted and fierce in nature. By the end of the day, the division had established communications with the 180th Rifle Division of the 1st Ukrainian Front's 27th Army, which had reached the western outskirts of Ol'shana.

Thus, the encirclement of the Germans had been completed. Now the mission was to prevent the encircled enemy grouping from breaking out to the south and linking up with those of its units trying to assist from without before the approach of the 4th Guards Army's forces. Consequently, the commander of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps was ordered to hold on to the Burty and Ol'shana line until the forces of the 4th Guards Army reached the Ol'shanka River, after which the corps was to envelop Ol'shana from the northwest and attack in the direction of Nabokov Khutor [Farm].

The corps commander issued a combat order, which assigned the following missions:

- the 12th Guards Cavalry Division will go over to the defense along existing lines, improve its positions, and hold on to them until the 4th Guards Army's units have reached the Ol'shanka River line, after which, having concentrated in the Iurnovo, Zelenaia Dubrova, and Kazatskoe region, be prepared to operate in the direction of Dymnov, Petriki, and Valiava.
- the 11th Guards Cavalry Division will remain along the line of the Ol'shanka River in the Viazovok and Verbovka sector, prevent units of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division from penetrating to the south, and, after the approach of our rifle units, concentrate in the Tolstaia region for joint operations with the 12th Guards Cavalry Division against Valiava, while enveloping Ol'shana from the west.
- the 63d Cavalry Division, in co-operation with units of the 180th Rifle Division, will capture Ol'shana and subsequently operate in the second echelon behind the 12th Guards Cavalry Division.

From 1 through 3 February, the corps' units engaged in intensive combat while holding on to their defensive line and repelling repeated enemy counterattacks. While overcoming resistance and repelling enemy infantry and tank counterattacks, on the morning of 1 February the 12th Guards Cavalry Division continued the offensive toward Burty. Having occupied the hills to the south and southwest, the units approached right up to this fortified point. Here, along a line from the Lenin State Farm, along the road to Burty, and along its southern and southwestern outskirts up to the southern edge of the forest west of Burty ran a line of continuous enemy trenches with a good field of fire toward the south.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

This sector was defended by enemy infantry, supported by tanks and self-propelled guns.

The 11th Guards Cavalry Division exchanged fierce fire in combat against enemy infantry and tanks in positions on the southwestern outskirts of Viazovok and Verbovka. The division's tank regiment, sent out to envelop Ol'shana, penetrated into Verbovka from the northeast and defeated the infantry group and rear service elements of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division. Co-operating with the 180th Rifle Division, the 63d Cavalry Division continued to fight street battles, having by this time captured only one quarter of Ol'shana.

With the approach of the 4th Guards Army's rifle units, the 12th Guards Cavalry Division withdrew from combat in the Zelenaia Dubrova and Iurkovo region, and, at 0700 hours on 2 February, it was committed into battle from the march to the left of the 11th Guards Cavalry Division with the mission of capturing Verbovka by means of joint operations and cutting off the path of withdrawal to the east for the German's Ol'shana garrison. Having forced a crossing over the Ol'shanka River, the 11th Guards Cavalry Division commenced intense street combat in Verbovka.

The battle to capture the important Ol'shana—Verbovka German center of resistance was fierce. For the Germans the loss of this center meant that their hopes of breaking out of encirclement in the direction of Zvenigorodka, the shortest path by which they could link up with the German panzer army coming to their aid from the south, would be shattered. Consequently, the Germans employed any and every measure to keep this center of resistance in their hands.

Throughout 2–3 February, the corps' offensive operations were unsuccessful. In these circumstances the corps commander decided to use two divisions (the 11th Guards and 63d) to contain the enemy on the Ol'shanaVerbovka line and to envelop Ol'shana from the north in a night maneuver with the forces of the 12th Guards Cavalry Division. On the night of 4 February, a concentric attack by all three cavalry divisions was to encircle and destroy the enemy in the Ol'shana-Verbovka region and, subsequently, to exploit the success toward Valiava.

During 4–5 February, corps units fought in the Ol'shana and Verbovka region. After unsuccessful attacks at the cost of heavy losses, during the second half of 4 February the enemy abandoned Verbovka and withdrew toward Petropavlovka. By the end of the day, units of the 11th Guards Cavalry Division had reached the eastern outskirts of Verbovka, having thus cut off the enemy's Ol'shana grouping from the forces operating in the Petropavlovka region.

By 1000 hours on 5 February, co-operating with one of the 12th Guards Cavalry Division's regiments which was attacking from the north, the 63d Cavalry Division had completely captured the village of Ol'shana. The remnants of the 'Germany' Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the 'Westland' Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the 'Narva' Battalion, the 39th Estonian Volunteer Field Security SS Battalion, and a training battalion of the SS 'Viking' Panzer Division were destroyed in the fierce battles.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Thus, the cavalry corps' battles in the Ol'shana and Verbovka region, in co-operation with rifle units and tanks, had been completed on 5 February with the complete defeat of the German grouping. During these battles the cavalry units had to dismount several times and even fight in street battles. With the support of attached artillery, the cavalry also successfully fought against enemy tanks.

Conclusions

During the encirclement of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping, the operations of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps had important operational significance. Cavalry corps units filled the gap between tanks and infantry caused by the rapid advance of the 5th Guards Tank Army's tank formations, and, after linking up with the 1st Ukrainian Front's units, they formed a second internal encirclement ring. As a result, our cavalry and infantry cut off all German routes of withdrawal from the north southward through Shpola and Ol'shana. Meanwhile, the tank units of both *fronts,* together with infantry and artillery, concentrated their main attention on the creation of an external front.

CAVALRY CORPS OPERATIONS DURING THE LIQUIDATION OF THE ENCIRCLED FORCES

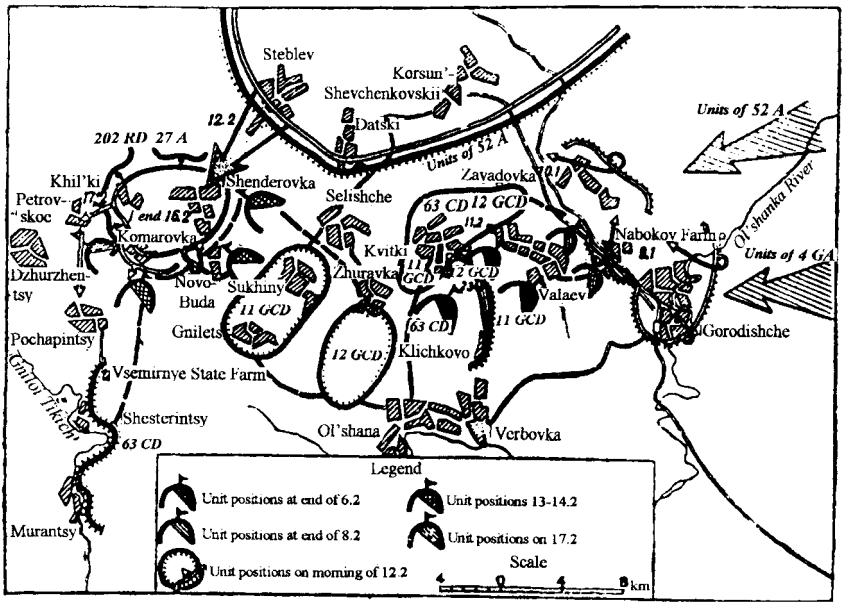
Cavalry corps battles for the populated point of Valiava (see Map 9)

In accordance with orders received from the 2d Ukrainian Front commander, after the defeat of the Germans in the Verbovka and Ol'shana region the corps was to capture the important strong point of Gorodishche in co-operation with units of the 4th Guards Army.

Valiava lay across the path of the cavalry corps' westward advance toward Gorodishche, and the capture of the former would remove the only trafficable road from Gorodishche to Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii. To cut this road meant to cut off the enemy's path of withdrawal from Gorodishche to Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii and to capture all his equipment situated in the Gorodishche region. Consequently, the corps commander decided at first to take Valiava and then, turning to the southeast, to attack to encircle and destroy the enemy in the Gorodishche region. In this regard, on the night of 6 February the cavalry divisions were assigned their missions.

The 11th Guards Cavalry Division was to continue its attack northward along the Verbovka and Valiava road and, by 1000 hours on 6 February, was to capture the southern part of Valiava; subsequently, turning eastward, it was to reach the eastern outskirts of this populated point and cut the road to Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii to the west of Gorodishche. The 12th Guards Cavalry Division was to advance on the 11th Division's left flank, and, by 1000 hours, was to

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 9. Operations of the 5th Guards Don Red Banner Cossack Cavalry Corps during the liquidation of the encircled enemy grouping

capture the northern part of Valiava; subsequently, it was to reach its northeastern outskirts and cut the Gorodishche-Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii road in the Nabokov Khutor region. The 63d Cavalry Division was to attack in the second echelon, behind the 12th Guards Cavalry Division.

As a result of the extraordinarily strong German resistance, Valiava was completely occupied by corps units only by the end of 7 February after intense street battles against groups of automatic-weapons men who were stubbornly defending in houses and buildings.

Heavy combat began east of this area along the Gorodishche-Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii road on the morning of 8 February. During the entire day, while overcoming strong resistance and repelling enemy counterattacks, the corps' units advanced only 1–1.5 kilometers. By this time, in connection with the advance of the enemy tank grouping from the south toward Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii in the 1st Ukrainian Front's sector, and its arrival in the Lysianka region, the threat was created of a penetration of the encirclement ring. The command organized a strong antitank defense on the axis of the enemy tank penetration in the Lysianka and Shenderovka region, while simultaneously taking measures to repel attempts by the encircled German grouping to break out from the north southward.

To this end, at 1900 hours on 8 February the 2d Ukrainian Front commander assigned the following mission to the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps: upon receipt of

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

a signal, the 63d Cavalry Division was to occupy a defense from Klichkovo to Hill 234 with its front facing to the east and prevent an enemy penetration to the west and southwest, and the main forces were to continue to destroy the encircled grouping, with the mission of linking up with units of the 52d Army in the Zavadovka region on the night of 9 February.

Carrying out the *front* commander's order, on receipt of the signal, at 1930 hours on 8 February the corps commander moved two of the 63d Cavalry Division's regiments to the Klichkovo and Hill 234 line with the mission of holding their occupied positions and repelling enemy attacks in the event the enemy's units penetrated through Valiava. In close co-operation with rifle units from the 2d Ukrainian Front's 52d and 4th Guards Army and the 1st Ukrainian Front's 27th Army, the corps' main forces continued to fight to destroy the encircled grouping, while compressing the encirclement ring.

On 9 February the enemy put up strong resistance before the corps' front and repeatedly launched counterattacks in the region east and southeast of Valiava. However, the Germans suffered heavy losses and were forced to withdraw to the northwest because of attacks from the east by units from the 52d and 4th Guards Armies and from the west by the cavalry corps' units. On this day units from the 52d and 4th Guards Armies, together with units of the 11th Cavalry Division, occupied Gorodishche, and, on the morning of 10 February, captured the Zavadovka strongpoint.

The battles for Shenderovka, Selishche, and Novo-Buda

While pursuing the aim of penetrating our defense and linking up with the tank grouping in the Lysianka region, during 10 February the encircled enemy forces were especially active in the Selishche and Shenderovka sector. The 5th Guards Cavalry Corps was employed to reinforce this axis.

At 0430 hours on 11 February, the 2d Ukrainian Front commander gave the following order:

> The enemy, encircled in the Korsun' region and squeezed into the ring, is attempting to break out from the Steblev region to the southwest. The Selishche and Steblev sector is considered the most likely enemy penetration sector, with his subsequent movement through Shenderovka toward Ryzhanovka or Zvenigorodka. The corps will be prepared for swift operations from the Kvitki and Valiava region to the west to intersect probable routes of enemy movement from the Steblev region to the south and southwest.

Thus, the corps turned almost 180 degrees to conduct operations against the enemy who was trying to break out from the encirclement ring. By the morning of 11 February, the corps had completed a night march in pouring rain and along exceptionally muddy roads, which exhausted the already over-tired horses, and

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

concentrated as follows: the 63d Cavalry Division in the northern part of Kvitki; the 11th Guards Cavalry Division in the southern part of Kvitki; and the 12th Cavalry Division in the northwestern part of Valiava.

During 11 February the corps conducted reinforced reconnaissance along the Selishche, Shenderovka, and Novo-Buda axes.

At 2240 hours the following combat instructions were received from the *front* commander:

> In order to protect reliably the flanks of the 5th Guards Tank Army and the 4th Guards Army, I order:
>
> 1. On receipt of a signal, the 63 CD [Cavalry Division], and the 444, 1669, and 150 ATAR [Antitank Artillery Regiments] are to reach the line of the Gniloi Tikich River by 0800 12.2.44 [0800 hours on 12 February 1944] with the missions [to establish] strong defenses of the villages of Vsemirnye Khutor [Farm], Shesterintsy, and Murzantsy on a front facing to the west and southwest and to prevent the enemy from penetrating to assist the encircled grouping.
> 2. By 0800 12.2.44 [0800 hours on 12 February 1944], the corps' main forces will concentrate in the Sukhiny, Zhuravka, and Gnilets region.
> 3. Establish communications with the 27th Army at Dzhurzhentsy; with the 6th Tank Army at Dashukovkha; with the 47th RC [Rifle Corps] at Lysianka; and with the 8 TBR 5 TA [8th Tank Brigade, 5th Tank Army] at Lysianka.

While fulfilling these combat instructions, by the morning of 12 February the formations had reached [the following positions]: the 63d Cavalry Division along the line of the Gniloi Tikich River, having occupied a defense in the Vsemirnye Khutor and Murzantsy sector with its front facing to the west; the 11th Guards Cavalry Division in the Sukhiny and Gnilets region; and the 12th Guards Cavalry Division in the region south of Zhuravka.

By this time, having counterattacked against our units from the Steblev region, enemy infantry, supported by guns, mortars, and several tanks, had captured Shenderovka, Novo-Buda, and Komarovka, and had begun to spread out toward Pochapintsy and Khil'ki. The formations of the encircled enemy grouping were threatening to link up with his tank units, which were advancing from the south. Therefore, the *front* commander undertook a number of measures appropriate for the situation. He decided to use the cavalry corps to encircle and destroy the enemy who had penetrated to Shenderovka and Novo-Buda. In accordance with this decision, the 63d Cavalry Division was removed from its defense along the Gniloi Tikich River, and the corps was transferred to the operational subordination of the 4th Guards Army.

It should be noted that, during this period, the corps was in a very difficult situation with respect to material—technical support. Because of the impassability of the roads and in light of the intensified thaw, deliveries to units

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

practically ceased. Ammunition and fuel were being exhausted. Tanks, self-propelled artillery, and motor vehicles were stretched out along the corps' combat paths, and were unable to take part in combat.

During the night and day of 13 February, the 11th and 12th Guards Cavalry Divisions fought in heavy combat to capture Novo-Buda and Shenderovka. After a night march, the 63d Cavalry Division reached Komarovka, and, on the morning of 13 February, while employing a force of up to an infantry regiment with 19 tanks, it joined battle against the enemy defending this populated point.

On 14 February the corps continued offensive combat with all of its divisions in a single-echelon combat formation. Pressed from the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region and Steblev, the enemy deployed from the march in the Shenderovka and Komarovka region in groups of from a company to an infantry battalion with separate guns and tanks and launched counterattacks in an attempt to break out to the southwest.

The divisions slowly pushed forward, and, while repelling the enemy's counterattacks and inflicting heavy losses upon him, it threw the Germans back to the northwest. During 14 February up to 19 large-scale enemy counterattacks were repulsed. By the end of the day, corps formations, while co-operating with units of the 29th Tank Corps and the 202d, 254th, and 62d Rifle Divisions, had reached the northern outskirts of Novo-Buda and Komarovka. The enemy garrison in Novo-Buda was completely destroyed.

While continuing their offensive, on 15 and 16 February corps units waged intense combat for possession of Shenderovka and Komarovka. The German resistance intensified. However, the area which they occupied sharply decreased. Thus, by the end of 16 February only three populated points—Shenderovka, Khil'ki, and Komarovka—were, in fact, in the hands of the encircled enemy. The Germans were deprived of the ability to maneuver, and their natural inclination was to break out to the south, without regard to losses.

The bitter cold which arrived on 16 February had an enormous effect on the course of combat operations. As a result of a snowfall which soon became a snowstorm, on 17 February large drifts were formed on the roads. Visibility was reduced to 20 meters. Movement was extremely difficult. The streets in populated points were completely covered with snow. Decisive combat took place in these conditions. Taking advantage of the inclement weather and poor visibility, at 0500 hours on 17 February the enemy broke out from the Shenderovka region and began to move in the direction of Petrovskoe in dense infantry columns.

In connection with the German break-through in the Shenderovka region, the corps' formations were assigned the following missions: the 63d Cavalry Division was to block enemy movement to the south and southwest from positions north of Komarovka; the 11th and 12th Guards Cavalry Divisions were to move forward west of Shenderovka and, together with the 63d Cavalry Division, attack the enemy's rear area and destroy him.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

At 1050 hours on 17 February, the divisions reached their jumping-off positions. However, by this time the enemy had begun to spread out from Khil'ki to the west of Komarovka and from Petrovskaia *[sic]* toward Pochapintsy. Despite their desperate attempts, however, the Germans were unable to break out of the encirclement. While repelling enemy attacks from the south, our tank, rifle, and cavalry units simultaneously conducted an attack against the remnants of the encircled grouping and, breaking them into pieces, destroyed them.

At 1100 hours on 17 February, the 2d Ukrainian Front commander ordered the cavalry corps to turn 180 degrees and, while enveloping Shenderovka and Novo-Buda from the south, to reach the Dzhurzhentsy and Pochapintsy region by attacking from the east, to clear the enemy out of the region, and then to destroy the penetrating group by a decisive blow from the southwest. Moving along very rugged terrain whose roads were covered with deep snow, the 11th and 12th Guards Cavalry Divisions completed a 40-kilometer march on tired horses, worn out by the poor road, and reached the indicated region only at 2000 hours on 17 February. During the day, while maneuvering and shifting from dismounted combat to attacks in mounted formation, the 63d Cavalry Division cut the German columns into pieces and successfully destroyed the enemy, who had lost his combat capability.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps was an effective maneuver means in the hands of the *front* command. By virtue of its battles in co-operation with other combat arms, this corps played a great role in the encirclement and destruction of the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping.

2. Having been committed into the penetration behind the tank formations, the corps exploited its mobility and high cross-country capability, and, in co-operation with tank and rifle units, it resolved successfully all its assigned missions for the encirclement and destruction of the enemy grouping. The role of cavalry units when there were no roads after heavy rains and the thaw and at the end of the operation after snowfalls that made the use of tank and mechanized units difficult increased significantly.

3. While fighting along the internal encirclement ring in co-operation with *front* tank and rifle units, the cavalry corps' divisions prevented the encircled German group from linking up with tank and infantry divisions which were approaching to assist them.

4. The *front* command's correct and skillful use of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation and the corps' combat operations, which bore a clearly expressed maneuver character, produced positive results. The role and place of cavalry in battle was determined each time by its mobility and active operations in the most dangerous and vulnerable axes and sectors.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

5. A peculiarity of the commitment of the corps into the penetration was the fact that the corps was forced to penetrate the enemy defense in the Kapitanovka region independently, and, in the two-day battle during the penetration, the corps suffered losses which somewhat weakened its personnel and equipment strength at the very beginning of the operation.

The commitment into the penetration itself was carried out in the evening and at night through a narrow passage with a width of 5 kilometers and along only one road. Simultaneously, and alternately with the corps' movement, artillery and rifle formations were moving their units along this very same road. This complicated communications with units and, in fact, led to a loss of control.

6. Combat operations occurred under difficult meteorological conditions, with sharply changing weather. The initial days of the operation were rainy and foggy and took place along extremely poor roads, and the final days were extremely cold and characterized by large snowfalls and storms. This resulted in extreme exhaustion for both men and horses.

7. In the conditions of a rapidly changing situation and poor roads, the cavalry divisions were sometimes forced to fight without reinforcements. In such conditions the appearance of even a few enemy tanks or his artillery had a negative effect on the course of battle.

8. From the beginning until the end of the operation, the corps' rear staff was located 100–150 kilometers away, while the supply station (at Znamenka) was even farther away. The exceptionally unfavorable weather made all roads impassable, not only for motor vehicle transport but also for horse-drawn transport. As a result, during the entire operation there was no delivery of food or forage. Provisions for men and horses was organized using local means, which were limited in view of the large number of forces in the region of the operation.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

4
Air Operations During the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

PREPARATION OF THE OPERATION

Air situation

Despite the fact that the weather in January 1944 was unfavorable for flying (days with dense clouds at low altitudes predominated, and there were frequent warm spells and precipitation, which caused aircraft to ice up), the air situation in the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts which preceded the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation was intense.

Exploiting the slightest improvement in the weather, enemy bomber aircraft in groups of from 40 to 50 and, sometimes, 60 aircraft with fighter cover delivered concentrated strikes against our forces, which were [operating] along the Staro-Konstantinov, Kirovograd, and Novo-Ukrainka axes, and supported their own forces, which were launching attacks along the Vinnitsa axis.

On separate days in January, the overall number of aircraft sorties conducted by enemy aviation in the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts reached 1,000 to 1,500, while, during the intensive days of combat along the Vinnitsa axis, the enemy concentrated the main mass of its aircraft in this region and conducted 500 to 600 aircraft sorties in this narrow front sector. Thus, for example, 340 aircraft sorties were conducted on 23 January in the Lipovets and Polonnoe region, and more than 600 enemy aircraft flights were noted on 24 January in this sector.

While protecting the operations of our ground forces from the air, the aircraft of the 2d Air Army (of the 1st Ukrainian Front) and the 5th Air Army (of the 2d Ukrainian Front) also operated with sufficiently great intensity. Throughout January the units and formations of these air armies conducted 14,739 aircraft sorties, including 5,140 assault, 3,386 bomber, and 6,213 fighter sorties.

Throughout the month, our aviation held on to the initiative in the air. The intensive operations of enemy aviation in separate front sectors, which was directed at the achievement of air superiority along important axes of ground force operations, usually led to bitter air battles in which enemy aircraft suffered heavy losses. During January 402 air battles occurred in which 432 enemy

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

aircraft were shot down. The most bitter struggle in the air occurred in the 2d Ukrainian Front sector. Here, 242 air battles took place during this period, and 272 enemy aircraft were shot down.

Grouping of aircraft and the correlation of forces

The German command concentrated a significant aviation force to protect the operations of its ground forces. By the beginning of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation, the German Fourth Air Fleet, whose headquarters was situated in Proskurov, was operating opposite the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts. This fleet consisted of the VIII, I, and IV Air Corps (in Vinnitsa, Pervomaisk, and Balta).

Before the beginning of active ground force combat operations, all types of intelligence determined the basing sites of 26 bomber groups, 10 fighter groups, and 25–30 reconnaissance detachments. Because of the great losses which enemy aviation had suffered in the course of the previous two months, the majority of these groups were not filled up to establishment [TO&E] requirements and their combat composition did not exceed 18–20 aircraft in bomber aviation groups and 25–27 aircraft in fighter aviation groups. The combat strength of the reconnaissance detachments was close to that required.

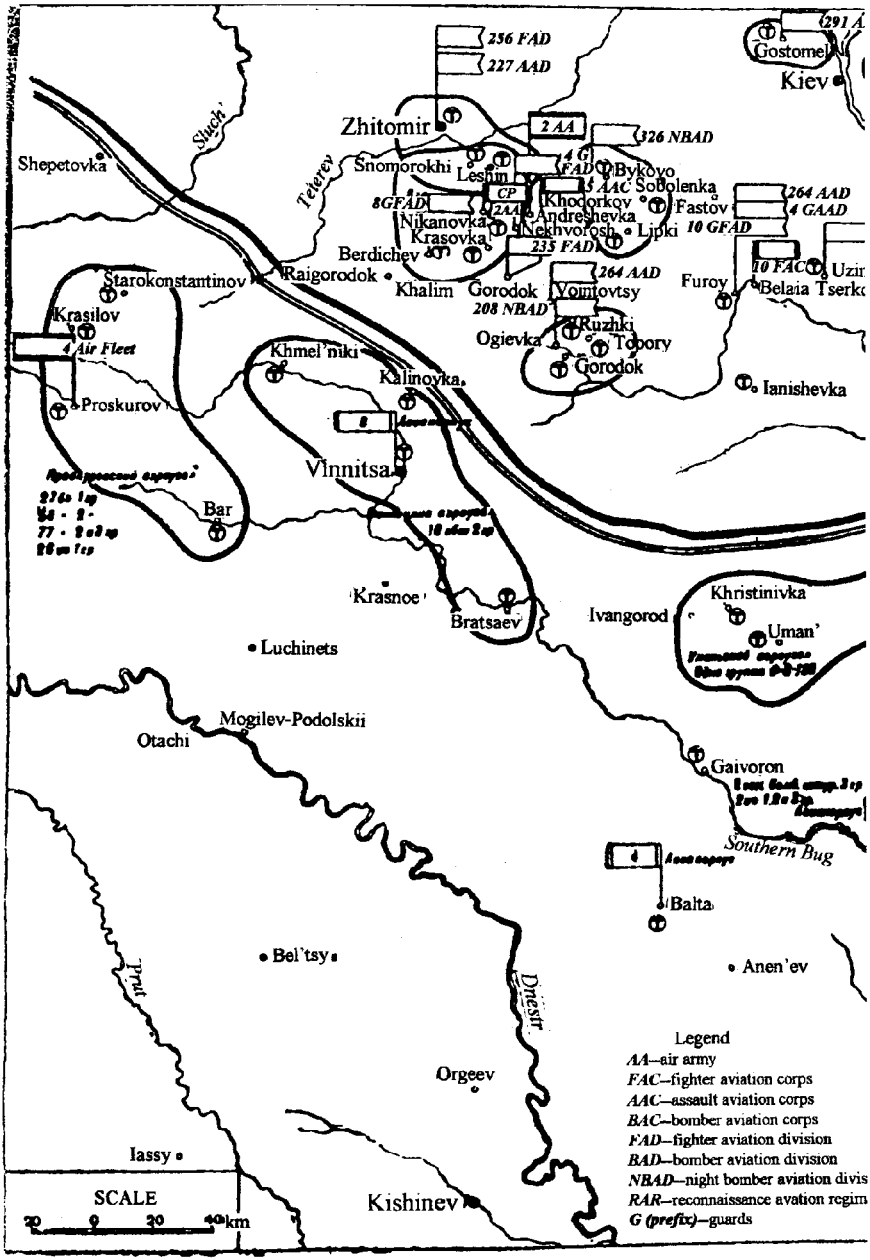
Thus, by 20–25 January 1944 the German Fourth Air Fleet had 450–500 bombers, 250–270 fighters, and 230–250 reconnaissance aircraft. One should note that a rather significant portion of the flight personnel, particularly of bomber aviation, were prepared for operations at night and in poor meteorological conditions, and also had sufficient combat experience. The main mass of enemy combat aircraft was based at permanent airfields near Proskurov, Vinnitsa, Pervomaisk, and Nikolaev, all of which had prepared landing strips (see Map 10).

Because of the loss of their Kirovograd airfield center, at the beginning of January the enemy was forced to disperse his aircraft which had earlier been based in that region to field airdromes and landing strips in the Novo-Ukrainka airfield center (at Elynka, Novomirgorod, and Malyi and Bol'shoi Viski). However, the sharp warm spell at the end of January and the associated soaking of field airdromes and air strips forced the Germans to transfer their aircraft to permanent airfields at the beginning of February.

The 2d Air Army, which was part of the 1st Ukrainian Front, had two fighter and one assault aviation corps and two assault and three bomber aviation (including two night) divisions. The 5th Air Army, which supported the operations of the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces, had two fighter, one assault, and one bomber aviation corps and one night bomber aviation division.

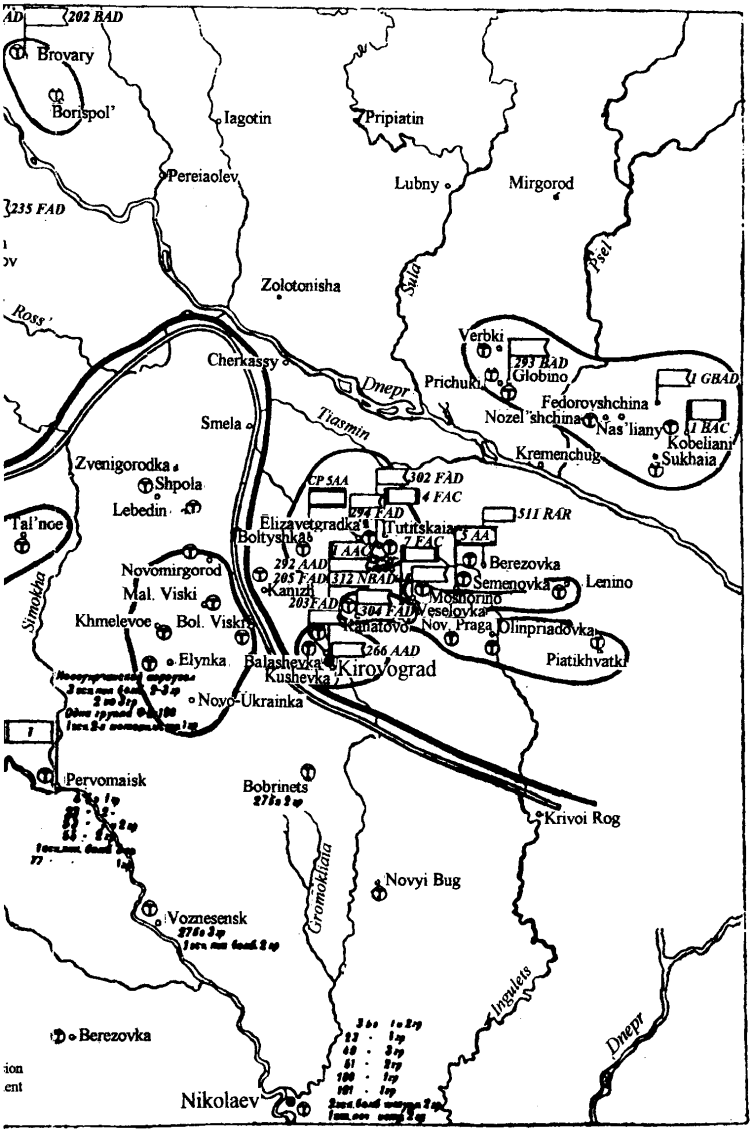
Almost all of our aircraft were based at airfields in the Zhitomir, Berdichev, Belaia Tserkov', and Kirovograd airfield centers (see Map 10). The majority of the airfields on which our aircraft were based consisted of narrow, extended strips,

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 10. Basing of the 2d and 5th Air Armies' aircraft and enemy aircraft by the end of

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



25 January 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

which permitted take-offs and landings in only two directions and accommodated not more than one pair of aircraft at the same time.

With the onset of the warm spell, the majority of the airfields were out of commission for a long period. There were very few airfields with prepared take-off and landing strips, and a great number of aircraft were usually concentrated on them. Thus, for example, by the beginning of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation, one assault and one fighter aviation division were based at the Kirovograd airfield.

Active combat activities in January were accompanied by inescapable losses of material equipment and flight personnel in air combat and from enemy antiaircraft artillery fire and also by great aircraft losses due to lack of repairs. Therefore, by the beginning of the operation the combat composition of units and formations far from corresponded to their establishment requirements. For example, the 2d Air Army's 10th Fighter Aviation Corps had 92 aircraft, and the 5th Assault Corps of that same army had a total of only 80 aircraft.

Table 2 shows the combat composition of the 2d and 5th Air armies and the correlation of forces.

TABLE 2

	Our aircraft				
Type aircraft	*2d AA*	*5th AA*	*Total*	*Enemy aircraft*	*Correlation of forces*
Fighter	164	241	405	260	1.5 : 1
Assault	92	93	185	–	–
Bomber:					
day	43	126	169	500	1 : 3
night	192	74	266	–	–
Recce	12	17	29	240	1 : 8
TOTAL	**503**	**551**	**1,054**	**1,000**	**1 : 1**

Note: Only operational aircraft are shown in the combat composition of the 2d and 5th Air Armies.

It can be seen from Table 2 that, with an identical total number of aircraft, the enemy had a three-fold superiority over us in the quantity of daylight bombers. However, if one counts the assault aircraft and night bombers, then the superiority in bomber aircraft remains on our side. We were also considerably superior to the enemy in fighter aircraft.

It is necessary to note that the 2d and 5th Air Armies' aircraft were concentrated at two or three airdrome centers, which were situated in the immediate vicinity of the regions of ground force operations, whereas enemy aircraft were scattered in a great number of airfields and, in fact, were operating against our four Ukrainian Fronts.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Thus, the overall superiority in aircraft by the beginning of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation was in our favor.

Planning of air combat operations

The documents which served as the basis for planning the combat operations of the 2d and 5th Air Armies were the decisions of the *front* commands regarding the encirclement and destruction of the enemy groupings located in the regions north of Zvenigorodka and Shpola.

Decision of the 5th Air Army command

On 20 January 1944, the commander of the 2d Ukrainian Front assigned aviation the following missions:

- co-operate with the forces of the 53d and 4th Guards Armies in penetrating the enemy defense between Balandino and Shpakovo by delivering bomber and assault strikes against enemy forces;
- protect the commitment into the penetration of the units of the 5th Guards Tank Army and their arrival at the Zhurovka, Zlatopol', and Novomirgorod line; and
- destroy enemy aircraft over the battlefield and provide cover to the combat formations of the 53d and 4th Guards Army and the 5th Guards Tank Army.

Depending on the missions which had been assigned to aviation, the 5th Air Army command reached its decision, which was officially formulated on 22 January by a combat order. On the whole, the decision anticipated the delivery of powerful strikes against enemy equipment and personnel in those regions where our ground forces were most likely to meet strong enemy resistance and the reliable protection of our attacking forces' combat formations against enemy air attacks.

In accordance with the combat order, on the first day of the operation the main efforts of 5th Air Army's aviation formations were concentrated on the 12-kilometer-long Kokhanivka and Timofeevskii front, which was the main attack axis of *front* forces. Aircraft operations were mainly designed to co-operate with the ground forces' offensive on the immediate field of battle. Consequently, the following employment of aircraft was envisioned. During the night preceding the offensive by *front* forces, night bomber aviation Po-2 aircraft were to bring pressure against the Kokhanivka, Reimentarovka, and Ositniazhka region with continuous air strikes designed to exhaust enemy forces.

Simultaneously with the ground force offensive (at 0900 hours), in 15 minutes 6 groups of bombers consisting of 6 to 9 aircraft each were to deliver concentrated strikes on artillery and mortar batteries in firing positions and in the Kokhanivka, Burtki, and Timofeevskii regions, and on the enemy command point in the Ositniazhka region. At the same time, assault aircraft, which were to be in

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

the air continuously from 0900 to 1000 hours and strike enemy firing means which interfered with the advance of our ground forces, would appear over the battlefield.

Subsequently, assault aircraft were to support our ground forces' offensive by bringing pressure to bear upon enemy objectives on the battlefield which had been identified by air reconnaissance and to act in response to the requirements of the 4th Guards and 53d Army commanders, and the bombers were to be prepared to deliver strikes against enemy reserves in the region west of Ositniazhka. Throughout the day, fighter aviation was assigned the mission of protecting the operations of the 5th Guards Tank, 4th Guards, and 53d Armies' forces and the assault aircraft and bombers.

All told, on the first day of the operation 740 aircraft sorties were planned, including 360 fighter sorties, 180 assault aircraft, and 200 bomber (of these, 100 were night). Aircraft operations were planned only for the first day of the operation; on subsequent days of the operation, it was assumed that aviation formations would assign missions by use of separate combat instructions based upon the concrete situation.

The decision of the 2d Air Army command differed in the sense that, besides the detailed assignment of specific missions to aviation formations on the first day of our ground force offensive, overall missions were assigned for the entire operation. According to this decision, assault aircraft were to operate against enemy artillery and mortar batteries to assist the penetration of the enemy defense by the 27th and 40th Armies' forces in the Tynovka and Krutye Gory sector, and, with the commitment of the 6th Tank Army into the penetration, by assault strikes against strong points and against approaching enemy reserves to protect the successful advance of the tank units and formations and their link-up with the 2d Ukrainian Front's mobile group in the Zvenigorodka region. The fighter aviation corps were assigned the mission to destroy enemy aircraft on the battlefield and to provide reliable air cover for the attacking units of the 40th and 27th Armies and for the 6th Tank Army. A single fighter division was transferred to the operational subordination of the assault aviation corps commander to provide fighter escort for the assault aircraft.

Besides these missions the 2d Air Army commander was allocated a small portion of the aircraft based at the Zhitomir airdrome center, which received the mission to destroy enemy aircraft at the Vinnitsa, Kalinovka, and Uman' airfields by means of systematic strikes by assault and fighter aircraft.

Organization of command and control and co-operation with the ground forces

To bring the basing of aircraft closer to the region of forthcoming ground force combat operations and to make command and control more convenient, the main mass of aviation units and formations were re-based to new airfields located in the immediate proximity of the front lines. In the 5th Air Army, this

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

concentration had been completed by 24 January. The issues of re-basing aircraft were resolved in somewhat more complex fashion in the 2d Air Army. Since the main forces of that army were continuing to co-operate with the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces in the repulse of savage counterattacks by a strong enemy grouping in the region southwest of Vinnitsa, at first only part of the force, namely, one fighter, one assault, and one night bomber aviation division, was allocated for the forthcoming operation. These aviation formations were concentrated at the Belaia Tserkov' airdrome center.

Thus, by the beginning of the operation the principal mass of the 5th and 2d Air Armies' assault and fighter aircraft were situated in immediate proximity to the region of combat operations, which, on the signal from the command posts of the ground armies, provided for the quick appearance by our fighters and assault aircraft over the battlefield. An exception were those small fighter aviation units whose airfields (Kanatovo and Veselovka) were 120–150 kilometers from the battlefield, and their operations for the most part took place within a limited radius.'

The command and control of the 5th Air Army's aviation formations was carried out from the army command post located in Boltyshka, close to the 2d Ukrainian Front's auxiliary command post. Wire and radio communications were established with every aviation formation (see Map 11). One should note that, in light of the poor condition of permanent lines and the bad weather, the means of wire communications were frequently damaged, and, as a result, the primary means of communications was radio, which in all instances was sufficiently stable.

For several days before the beginning of the operation, the commanders of the aviation corps and separate divisions, together with the commanders of the ground armies and the commanders of the mobile groups, conducted [war] games of the projected operation, where all questions of co-operation were worked out in detail. Special attention was paid to co-operation between assault aviation units and the tank armies.

On the eve of the operation, command posts were organized for the commanders of aviation corps in the regions where the commanders of ground armies were positioned. Thus, for example, the 1st Guards Assault Aviation Corps commander had his command post at the 53d Army command, and the commander of one of the assault divisions was located at the command post of the 4th Guards Army commander. Furthermore, the command and control of the 4th Fighter Corps was carried out from the command post of the 4th Guards Army.

The aviation corps commanders had with them a group of staff officers and sufficient quantities of radio equipment necessary to provide control of aircraft in the skies over the battlefield and also summon them from airfields. Such co-operation made it possible for the commanders of ground armies to assign missions immediately to aircraft operating in their interests; it also provided the commanders of aviation corps and divisions not only rapid summons of assault

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

aircraft and fighters to the battlefield but also the capability for redirecting them in the skies to other objectives in the sharply changing ground conditions.

Command and control in the 2d Air Army was organized somewhat differently. The concentration of a large number of units of various formations at one airdrome center required the creation of special command and control organs for the combat operations of these units. By virtue of a decision of the 2d Air Army commander, aviation units concentrated at the Belaia Tserkov' airdrome center were operationally subordinated to the 2d Air Army deputy commander. With him was an operational group of the army staff, headed by the chief of the operational department. The operational group consisted of five officers, including one from the army intelligence department of the army staff and one each from aviation formations operating along this axis.

The command post of the army deputy commander had communications with the headquarters of the 2d Air Army, the auxiliary command post of the 1st Ukrainian Front, and the headquarters of the 27th and 40th Armies, as well as with all aviation formations concentrated at the Belaia Tserkov' airdrome center. The creation of the additional command post ensured flexible command and control of units based at the Belaia Tserkov' airdrome throughout the operation and the precise organization of co-operation between different types of aviation.

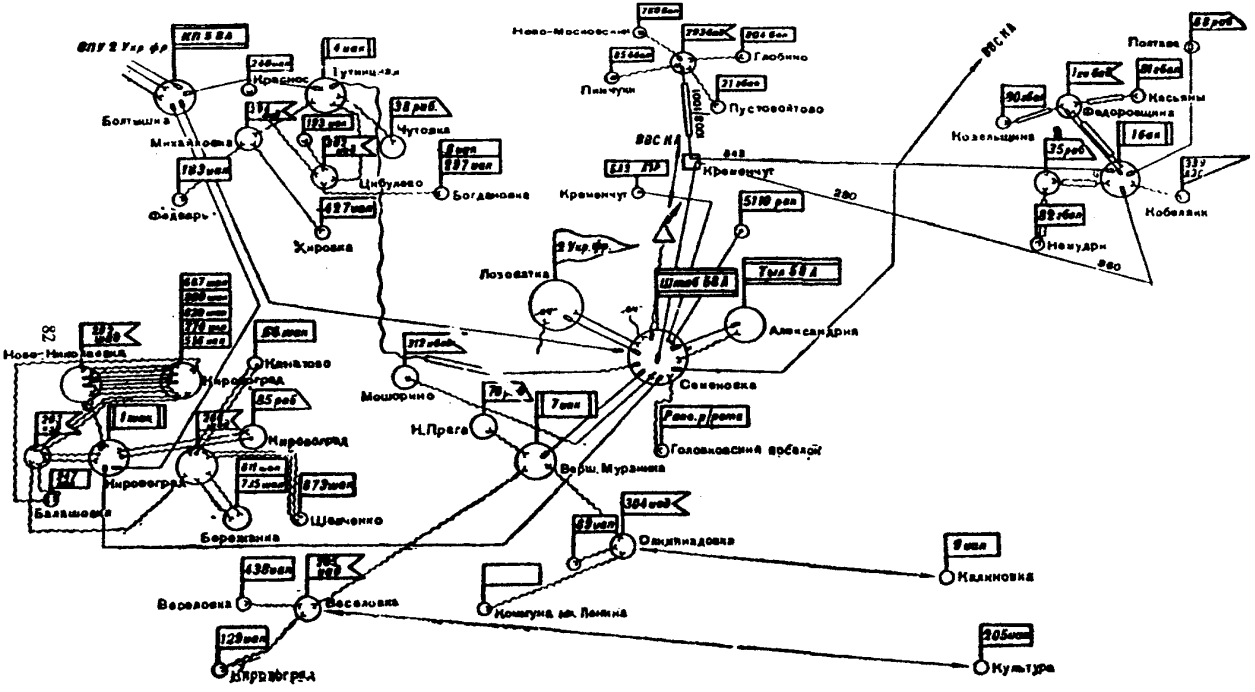
AIR COMBAT OPERATIONS

Air operations during the penetration of the defense and the encirclement of the enemy

Exceptionally bad weather prevailed throughout the period of the penetration of the defense (low cloud ceilings, frequent fog, and snowfall), which not only limited but very often completely excluded air operations for an extended period of time. There were especially bad meteorological conditions at the beginning of the operation, that is, from 24 through 27 January; during this period aircraft from both sides were almost completely inactive.

On the first day of the operation (24 January) when the reinforced battalions conducting reconnaissance on the adjacent flanks of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies penetrated the enemy defense, the 5th Air Army's aircraft could not conduct combat operations since the aviation units' base airfields were closed by fog. Only during the second half of the day, after the fog began to disperse, did a portion of the fighters and assault aircraft take off on combat missions. One must mention that, on that day, when the 4th Guards and 53d Armies' main forces had not yet been committed into battle, and, in fact, only separate battalions were conducting heavy combat in the depth of the enemy's defensive belt, our aviation was not able to help them from the skies. During the second half of the day and the night of 25 January, it conducted only 75 aircraft sorties, including 23 flights

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 11. Wire communications of the 53d Army on 25 January 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

by night bombers and 39 by fighters. Fighters which managed to take off conducted three air battles in which five enemy aircraft were shot down.

It is characteristic to note that, at the time when all of the 5th Air Army's airfields were closed by fog, a portion of the enemy's airfields remained open. This created very favorable conditions for operations by his aircraft, which, during the entire day and, in particular, in the second half, delivered strikes by large bomber groups of up to 24 Ju-87 and Ju-88 aircraft against the combat formations of our attacking forces. Overall, 380 aircraft sorties, including 335 bomber sorties, were noted throughout the day in the 4th Guards and 53d Armies' sectors.

As already mentioned, during the final days of the operation, unfavorable meteorological conditions in the 2d Ukrainian Front's sector completely excluded air operations by both sides. The weather improved somewhat only during the second half of the day on 28 January, which permitted the 5th Air Army's aviation to conduct 63 aircraft sorties. The principal mass of flights (58 air sorties) were carried out by fighter aircraft to cover ground force operations on the battlefield against strikes by enemy bomber aircraft.

The partial improvement in the weather was exploited by enemy aviation to exert pressure from the air on our forces advancing in the Kapitanovka region. During the short interval, 62 enemy aircraft sorties were recorded in that region, of which 37 were conducted by bombers.

Meteorological conditions were somewhat better in the 1st Ukrainian Front's sector and permitted the conduct of air combat operations. These operations, however, were concentrated mainly along the Vinnitsa axis, where the enemy continued fierce counterattacks. Here, strong attacks by enemy ranks and infantry on the ground were accompanied by very intensive operations by his aircraft in the air. From 25 through 28 January, more than 850 aircraft sorties were recorded, including up to 500 flights carried out by bombers. While co-operating with forces of the 38th Army and the 40th Army's right wing in the repelling of enemy tank and infantry counterattacks southwest of Vinnitsa, the 2d Air Army's aircraft conducted around 1,000 aircraft sorties. During this period 40 air battles were fought, in which 58 enemy aircraft were shot down.

In front of the 1st Ukrainian Front's left wing, where the forces of the 27th Army and part of the 40th Army were conducting offensive combat along the Zvenigorodka axis, the enemy did not conduct bomber aircraft operations, limiting himself to flights by individual reconnaissance aircraft and small groups of fighters which were providing cover for their own ground forces. The air armies' units helped the attacking ground forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front's left wing with bomber and assault aircraft operations. More than 400 aircraft sorties were conducted in their interests.

In addition to operations against enemy forces on the battlefield and the destruction of enemy aircraft in the air, the 2d Air Army operated against enemy airfields. Thus, on 25 January night bombers delivered strikes against the Uman'

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

and Vinnitsa airfields, and, as a result, 12 enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground, 2 aircraft were shot down in air combat, and a hanger was destroyed.

From 29 January through 3 February, that is during the period when the encirclement of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping was being completed, the weather was extremely unstable. During this entire period cumulonimbus snowfall occurred, there was usually fog in the morning, and there was a continuous cloud ceiling at a height of 100–150 meters. The temperature was above 0 degrees [centigrade], and this led to sodden surfaces at air strips and the disabling of many airfields. Thus, for example, on 2 February in the 5th Air Army, the Veselovka and Krasnosel'e airfields were disabled, and the Tsibulevo airfield proved to be fit for limited service. On 3 February in the same army, only two airfields, those at Kirovograd and Dmitrovka, proved to be fit for combat work, and all remaining airfields were either entirely disabled or fit for only limited service. An analogous situation existed in the 2d Air Army, which, in the initial days of February, completely switched over to the support of forces operating on the Zvenigorodka axis.

All of this sharply decreased the intensity of our forces' air combat operations just when ground conditions required the most powerful pressure from the air against counterattacking enemy tanks and infantry. In these complex conditions, the aviation units and formation of the 5th and 2d Air Armies had to exploit even an insignificant improvement in the weather for combat operations. 'Do not miss the weather' became the principal demand which was made of aviation. Because of this demand, throughout this period assault aircraft and fighters remained in a high state of readiness; pilots often sat in their aircraft so that they could quickly take off on combat missions with the slightest improvement in the weather.

Despite the bad meteorological conditions, our aviation provided great assistance to 1st and 2d Ukrainian Front forces in completing the encirclement of the enemy grouping and in repelling counterattacks by his tanks and infantry. During this entire period, most serious attention was devoted to the conduct of air reconnaissance. To this end, every improvement in the weather, even if insignificant, was exploited, while reconnaissance flights were generally carried out by the most experienced bomber and fighter crews.

Thanks to the well-organized air reconnaissance, the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Front commands received in timely fashion sufficiently complete information about the regroupings of enemy forces, which had immense significance in the conditions of the rapidly changing situation. Furthermore, the continuous receipt from air reconnaissance of information about the enemy permitted the air army commands to exploit more effectively those small number of air sorties which they could generate on those days.

There were instances during the course of combat operations when air attacks on enemy forces, which had been detected in timely fashion, facilitated to a considerable degree the repulsion of counterattacks by German ground forces. Thus, on 31 January, when the forces of the 5th Guards Tank, 4th Guards, and 53d Armies were beating back strong counterattacks by enemy tanks and infantry

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

from the Novomirgorod, Lysianka (18 kilometers south-west of Shpola), and Gorodishche regions, air reconnaissance detected the movement of 80 tanks to the west of Novomirgorod and up to 100 vehicles in the Gorodishche region. Air strikes were quickly organized against the detected columns, which inflicted great losses on the enemy. During a short space of time, several tanks and 32 vehicles were destroyed, and 2 warehouses with ammunition were blown up; the enemy counterattacks failed.

On 2 February enemy tanks launched several strong counterattacks in the direction of Iskrennoe (10 kilometers west of Shpola). The situation of our ground forces in this sector was exceptionally tense. Lacking nearby reserves which could have been committed to battle, the commander decided to employ the 1st Guards Assault Aviation Corps along that axis.

At 0700 hours the 5th Air Army commander ordered the commander of this corps:

> To dispatch all forces to destroy the enemy tank group in the Iskrennoe region. Begin combat operations at 0820 hours without reconnaissance; the corps commander will control the assault aircraft from the 5th Guards Tank Army commander's observation post.

To fulfill the assigned mission, within a short time span the corps' units conducted 127 aircraft sorties. Groups of assault aircraft, numbering nine or ten aircraft each, brought pressure upon the German tanks and vehicles by continuous strikes, by carrying out five or six or more runs on their targets. Thanks to the powerful air support of the assault aircraft, the forces of the 5th Guards Tank and 53d Armies not only beat back the enemy counterattacks but also inflicted huge losses on him.

The operations of our aircraft and, in particular, our assault aircraft, were especially effective, and many reports from ground force commands bear witness to this fact.

Limited by bad meteorological conditions and encountering strong resistance from our fighters over the battlefield, enemy aircraft were not particularly active during this period. As had been the case previously, only individual reconnaissance aircraft flights were noted opposite the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces, and air activity in the 2d Ukrainian Front's sector was somewhat more intensive. Here, on separate days and while co-operating with their counterattacking forces, enemy bombers in groups of from 9 to 15 Ju-87 and Ju-88 aircraft each bombed our forces' combat formations. The most effective enemy bombing was recorded in the Shpola and Lebedin region on 30 January and 1 February 1944.

Table 3 shows the number of our aircraft sorties and enemy aircraft flights which occurred from 29 January through 3 February.

Thus, given the even correlation of forces, our aviation conducted twice as many aircraft sorties as German aviation, which provided us the capability of not

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

TABLE 3

	Our aviation		*Enemy aviation*	
Type of aircraft	*2d Air Army*	*5th Air Army*	*1st Ukr. Front sector*	*2d Ukr. Front sector*
Fighter	517	957	–	–
Assault	457	569	–	–
Bomber:				
day	39	109	–	–
night	88	73	–	–
Total	1,101	1,708	706	727

only pressuring enemy forces but also of conducting a very successful struggle with enemy aircraft in the skies. During the period from 29 January through 3 February, the 5th Air Army's aviation conducted 102 air battles, in which 94 enemy aircraft were shot down, and, during the same period, in 18 air battles, the 2d Air Army shot down 37 enemy aircraft.

One should note that the large number of sorties by our fighter aircraft out of the total number of aircraft sorties ensured air superiority for our aircraft throughout the period. Encountering strong resistance in the air and suffering heavy aircraft losses, very often the enemy was forced to send out his FW-190 fighter, which was armed with 50 and 100 kilogram [120–220 pound] bombs, to serve as an assault-bomber over the battlefield.

Air operations during the period of the destruction of the encircled enemy grouping (4–17 February)

Meteorological conditions were even worse in this period than during the period of the encirclement of enemy forces. Almost every day the daytime air temperature reached +8 degrees centigrade. From 31 January through 13 February, there was almost no snow cover. Rain and fog were usual phenomena. Beginning on 14 February a cold snap began, snow fell, and then, on 17–18 February, a snow blizzard developed, with wind gusts of up to 16–18 meters per second.

The increased air temperature, rains, and the thaw put out of commission the majority of 2d and 5th Air Army airfields.

During this period our aircraft operated only from those airfields which had [permanently prepared] take-off and landing strips.

From 4 through 17 February in the 2d Ukrainian Front, the enemy conducted practically no combat operations. Only 227 flights were noted for the entire period, mainly by reconnaissance and transport aircraft, and on some days (5, 7, 15, 17, and 18 February), no enemy aircraft at all were reported to have appeared.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

In the 2d Ukrainian Front, enemy aviation sharply increased their activity, in the first place along those axes where the enemy was striving to penetrate our defense with his tanks and unite with the encircled forces. The greatest activity by enemy bomber aircraft was reported on 4, 9, and 13 February in the Tynovka, Vinograd, Zvenigorodka, and Lysianka regions, where *VNOS* [air activity warning system] posts registered from 300 to 500 aircraft flights daily.

As a consequence of the bad meteorological conditions and the disabling of the majority of its airfields, the 5th Air Army's aviation was unable to exploit all of its combat capabilities. For example, with the exception of 4 February, during the entire period the bomber aviation corps' units, which were in a state of full combat readiness every day, conducted no combat operations.

In spite of the bad weather, throughout the period from 4 through 18 February the 5th Air Army conducted 1,411 aircraft sorties, that is, 6 times as many as enemy aviation. It is typical that, while during the period of the encirclement of enemy forces the greatest number of aircraft sorties were carried out by fighters, during this period more than 50 per cent of all sorties were conducted by assault aircraft (721 aircraft sorties). This is explained by the absence of resistance by enemy aircraft in the skies and the constant acute necessity for assisting ground forces on the battlefield. Consequently, a significant portion of fighter aircraft sorties also occurred against enemy forces on the battlefield.

Since the bad weather throughout the period excluded the possibility of operations by large groups of aircraft, usually small groups and single pairs of assault aircraft and fighter 'hunters' with the best-prepared flight crews were sent to the battlefield. Encounters with enemy aircraft were very rare; thus, throughout the period, a total of only 15 air battles occurred, in which 7 enemy aircraft were shot down.

In addition to operations against enemy forces on the battlefield, considerable attention was devoted to the destruction of enemy transport aviation. A number of strikes were delivered against enemy airfields for that purpose, which destroyed around 30 Ju-52 aircraft.

Night bombers (Po-2 aircraft) provided vital help to ground forces in the destruction of the encircled enemy grouping. In spite of exceptionally complex meteorological conditions, they used a considerable part of each night for their combat work.

The most revealing example of combat operations by night aircraft was the destruction of the group of German forces in the Shenderovka region on the night of 17 February. That night there was a strong blizzard and wind gusts that reached 15 meters per second. However, the situation required air strikes, and the night aircraft of the 5th Air Army were assigned such a mission. Several aircraft 'hunters', whose combat armament included a large quantity of *AZh-2* ampoules [incendiary canisters], were sent to fulfill this mission. They created several fires in the target region, after which the remaining aircraft attacked the lit-up targets. The night aircraft operations turned out to be so effective that the enemy was forced to abandon Shenderovka.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

During this period the main efforts of the 2d Air Army's aviation were concentrated on the destruction of enemy aircraft, in particular transport types. Co-operation with the forces of the 27th and 40th Armies in the destruction of the encircled enemy grouping was relatively unimportant. An exception was the period from 10 through 16 February when the enemy was carrying out fierce counterattacks southwest of Zvenigorodka to link up with the encircled grouping. During this period the units of the 5th Assault Aviation Corps' formations were re-based from the Zhitomir airdrome center to the Belaia Tserkov' center to co-operate more closely with the ground forces.

The struggle with enemy transport aviation

After the enemy grouping north of Zvenigorodka and Shpola had been encircled by a dense ring of our rifle units and their provision by all essential means of ground transport had ceased, on 31 January and 1 February the German command hurriedly transferred the 40 Ju-52 aircraft of the 3d Transport Group from the Proskurov region to the Uman' airfield. One transport group was also transferred from the L'vov region to airfields at Vinnitsa and Novo-Ukrainka. Simultaneously, several combat aviation subunits, equipped with the He-111 aircraft, which was based at the Vinnitsa and Novo-Ukrainka airfields, was enlisted for the transport of supplies to the encircled grouping. In addition, several score four-motor FW-90 and FW-200 aircraft were employed for transport purposes. Thus, at 1600 hours on 31 January the landing of 19 FW-200 aircraft was registered at an area 5 kilometers southeast of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, and on 3 February ground forces in the 1st Ukrainian Front sector observed a flight of 10 FW-90 aircraft.

Exploiting the low and dense cloud cover, on 31 January the enemy began the extensive daylight use of Ju-52 aircraft for the transport of ammunition, fuel, medical materials, and food to the forces encircled in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region. The aircraft took out the wounded and brought out officer cadre on their return runs. The flights of transport aircraft occurred in large groups (of 15–18, and even 25 aircraft) under fighter protection. The transporting was carried out from aircraft landed on hurriedly prepared landing strips in the immediate vicinity of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii. Vacant gardens, small clearings, and so forth were used as landing strips. Air reconnaissance detected up to 8 operating landing strips, where sometimes up to 100 Ju-52 were located simultaneously, that were established in the region of the encircled grouping.

In conditions of modern war, the encirclement of enemy forces cannot be considered final if the closed circle of ground forces is not supplemented by a solid air blockade. Consequently, on 1 February the struggle with enemy transport aircraft became one of the most important missions of our aviation. Since the basing of the 2d Air Army permitted the easiest interception of enemy aircraft during their flight to the region of the encircled grouping, the Red Army

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Air Force commander assigned it [the air army] the mission of fighting with enemy transport aircraft.

To fulfill this mission to the fullest, the 2d Air Army commander decided to carry out the struggle with enemy transport aircraft by:

- assault aircraft strikes on enemy equipment at the Uman' and Vinnitsa airfields and their simultaneous blockade with fighters;
- night and day operations against aircraft on landing strips in the region of the encircled grouping; and
- destruction of enemy transport aircraft in the air along their flight routes.

The struggle with enemy transport aircraft was conducted with exceptional bravery and persistence by the 2d Air Army's flight crews. Fighter operations were particularly effective. Typically, the struggle with transport aircraft was conducted not only by specially assigned aircraft but also by all fighter aircraft as a whole. Even in those instances when the fighters were fulfilling such missions as accompanying assault aircraft or bombers, they exploited any possibilities for the destruction of enemy transport aircraft. Thus, on 1 February, while accompanying assault aircraft in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region, six La-5 aircraft of the 10th Fighter Aviation Corps encountered 16 Ju-52 aircraft. Having assessed the situation, the commander of the fighter group left one pair of La-5 aircraft to cover the assault aircrafts' flight, and he himself, with two pairs, attacked the group of Ju-52 aircraft. Nine enemy aircraft were shot down as a result of the four-minute air battle.

The most successful day in the struggle with enemy transport aircraft was 3 February. That day, in 20 air battles conducted, the 2d Air Army's units shot down 13 Ju-52, 5 Me-109, and 2 FW-190 type aircraft. Assault aircraft and fighters destroyed or damaged up to 60 Ju-52 aircraft in actions at the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, Zavadovka, Tagancha, Sitniki, and Derenkovets field landing strips.

As a consequence of the huge losses suffered by transport aircraft on these days, the enemy was forced to conduct flights of transport aircraft only at night. Thus, in the very first days, the German command's attempt to assist its encircled forces by means of transport aviation failed.

Great losses were suffered by the enemy as the result of actions against his airfields situated outside of the encirclement ring. A series of concentrated strikes by all types of aircraft was delivered against these airfields. Thus, on 4 February assault aircraft inflicted a strike on the Uman' airfield, on 9 February assault and fighter aircraft delivered two consecutive strikes against the Vinnitsa airfield, and, on 11 February, a repeat strike was delivered against the Vinnitsa airfield and a strike on the Kalinovka airfield. As a result of the assault and fighter aircraft strikes on enemy airfields, 80 enemy aircraft were destroyed or damaged.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Despite the great losses in aircraft, the enemy was forced to continue the provisioning of their encircled grouping with the help of transport aviation. After 8 February the encirclement ring was so compressed that it was exposed to our artillery fire. The transport of supplies and personnel from landed aircraft became extraordinarily complex and risky for the Germans. The enemy was forced to shift to the dropping of supplies by parachute.

Besides the 2d Air Army, the 10th Fighter Aviation Corps of *PVO* [*protivovozdushnaia oborona*—air defense] was enlisted in the struggle with enemy transport aviation. For four days (9–11 and 13 February), this corps made 143 combat sorties and conducted 8 air battles, as a result of which 9 enemy aircraft were shot down, including 8 type Me-109 and 1 type Ju-52. Fifty-two Ju-52 aircraft and 2 He-111 aircraft were destroyed on the ground by assault aircraft operations against enemy landing strips.

Thanks to the active operations by our aircraft, the resupply of the encircled enemy grouping in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region was frustrated. Enemy transport aviation suffered huge losses. Thus, from 31 January through 18 February more than 200 Ju-52 type enemy aircraft were destroyed in air combat and at their airfields. In fact, by the end of the operation, he had lost almost all of his transport aircraft which were concentrated on that axis.

Transport of cargo

The sharp thaw and frequent precipitation led to the fact that, by 6 February, the roads had become impassable for all types of transport. The supply of the 1st Ukrainian Front's ground forces, in particular tanks, having been cut off from their rear services, became extraordinarily complex. The *front* Military Council was forced to task the 2d Air Army's aviation with providing forces with ammunition and fuel. The air army commander fully allocated a night bomber aviation division (with Po-2 aircraft) to fulfill this order. By 6 February this division, which consisted of four regiments, was transferred from the Khodorkov airfield to airfields at Fursy and Ilanishevka.

The transporting of cargo was carried out from aircraft which landed in the dispositions of ground force forward units. The loading of aircraft occurred in various ways, whose principal variants were as follows.

Cartridges for rifles and automatic weapons, 45mm shells for antitank guns, *RGZ* [fragmentation] grenades, and antitank rounds and mines were packed in soft bags weighing 100–120 grams when fully loaded. One such bag was suspended under the fuselage. In addition, one box with cartridges was hung in the navigator's cabin. The total load in the aircraft was 180 kilograms [396 pounds].

Fuel was suspended in benzene [gasoline] tanks under the fuselage, while two benzene tanks (240 kilograms [528 pounds]) were suspended under aircraft with new motors. The 76mm shells were packed in cassettes [large magazines] with 8 rounds in each. Two such cassettes were hung to the bomb brackets.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Shells for grenade launchers were hung without packing to the bomb brackets (after additional adaptation) with 4 shells per aircraft. In addition, a box with the fuses for these shells was placed in the navigator's cabin. The overall weight of this cargo on the aircraft was 210 kilograms (462 pounds).

Combat work for the transportation of cargo for the 2d and 6th Tank and the 40th Armies began on 8 February. From 8 through 16 February, 822 aircraft sorties were made in exceptionally complex meteorological conditions. These sorties delivered 49 tons of fuel and oil, 65 tons of ammunition, and 625 shells for guards mortar units to the ground forces.

The transporting took place during daytime and at night. During the daytime our Po-2 aircraft pilots flew over the front lines and landed on landing strips situated in the immediate proximity of the front lines. This sometimes led to great losses from antiaircraft fire and enemy fighter aircraft. Thus, for example, on 16 February, during the transporting of cargo for the 6th Tank Army, the division lost 11 of its 55 incoming aircraft.

RESULTS OF COMBAT AIR OPERATIONS

Air operations during the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation occurred in exceptionally unfavorable meteorological conditions. Throughout the period of combat operations for the encirclement and destruction of enemy forces, not a single day was completely suitable for flying. There was particularly bad weather in the 2d Ukrainian Front's sector, where, during the whole period, more than two-thirds of the days were completely unsuitable for flying.

Despite the complex meteorological conditions, our aviation provided great assistance to the ground forces in carrying out the encirclement and destruction of the enemy. For clarity, Table 4 registers the indices of our combat aircraft operations and those of the enemy.

Table 4 clearly shows that, given the almost identical quantities of aircraft as the enemy, the 2d and 5th Air Armies' aircraft conducted 60 per cent more aircraft sorties. This is explained, first and foremost, by the fact that, during the entire period of active operations by our ground forces, our aviation units and formations exploited literally every improvement in the weather, even if considered insignificant in normal circumstances, for combat flights. In individual instances when the assistance of aircraft in the skies was especially necessary for the ground forces, a portion of the assault and fighter aircraft crews was located in their aircraft in order to take off quickly on combat missions given any slight improvement in the weather.

During the entire operation, and particularly during the period of the destruction of the encircled enemy grouping, assault aviation operated most intensively. During the operation, every operable assault aviation aircraft conducted 16.5 sorties, while the share of each fighter was only 8.5 sorties. Thanks to such an intensity of assault aircraft combat operations, the 1st and 2d

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

TABLE 4

Formation and front	*Total sorties*	*Fighter*	*Assault*	*Bomber*		*Transport*
				Day	*Night*	
Our aircraft:						
2d Air Army	6,081	1,824	1,713	224	2,320	–
5th Air Army	3,212	1,478	1,318	149	267	–
10th Fighter Aviation Corps	143	143	–	–	–	–
Total	9,436	3,445	3,031	373	2,587	–
Enemy aircraft:						
In the 1st Ukrainian Front sector	4,478	1,078	–	2,500	–	900
In the 2d Ukrainian Front sector	1,428	428	–	3,300	–	200
Total	5,906	1,506	–	3,300	–	1,100

Ukrainian Front forces had sufficiently powerful air support in the struggle with enemy tanks and infantry.

The struggle with enemy aircraft during the operation and, first and foremost, with transport aircraft, was conducted very effectively. This is clearly shown by Table 5.

TABLE 5

Formation	*Air battles*	*Enemy losses*				*Our losses*
		Fighter	*Bombers*	*Transport*	*Total*	
2d Air Army	106	92	23	28	143	74
5th Air Army	117	56	47	2	105	49
10th Fighter Aviation Corps	8	8	–	1	9	–
Total	231	156	70	31	257	123

Besides the aircraft shot down in air battles, large numbers of them were destroyed on the airfields. Based upon information from the 2d and 5th Air Armies' headquarters, during the operation more than 200 aircraft were destroyed on the ground by assault aircraft and bomber operations, and transport aircraft (type Ju-52) constituted an absolute majority of them. The effective struggle with enemy aircraft on the ground and in the air frustrated enemy supply of their encircled grouping by means of transport aviation and, at the same time, considerably facilitated the ground forces' struggle.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The struggle with enemy transport aviation was conducted by every means, that is, by means of air battles, by strikes against airfields, and by blockading them. It should be noted that the most effective means in the struggle with transport aviation were the actions of our assault aircraft and fighters against the airfields. To a considerable extent, this was facilitated by the fact that a large number of airfields were out of commission because of soaked soil, and, as a result, enemy aircraft, including transport aircraft, were forced to base themselves only at those airfields which possessed [permanent] landing strips. This led to the great congestion of aircraft at the Vinnitsa and Uman' airfields, which our aircraft exploited.

During the operation our aircraft rendered assistance to the ground forces not only by the destruction of enemy personnel and combat equipment but also by providing the 1st Ukrainian Front's units and formations with ammunition and fuel. In the situation when the ground forces were in a position to successfully complete the operation, the use of night aircraft (Po-2 aircraft) for the transportation of cargo proved its complete expediency.

In conditions of roadlessness and the successful struggle of ground forces with the encircled enemy grouping, the support of forces with ammunition and fuel was a more important mission for Po-2 aircraft than their operations against personnel and equipment on the battlefield. This is because the cargo brought in by aircraft was exploited by the ground forces incomparably more effectively than the quantity of cargo (bombs) dropped on the battlefield at night by aircraft.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 1: Documents on the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

1. From a 12 January 1944 Directive of the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command to the Commanders of the Forces of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts concerning the conduct of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation

An enemy grouping, which is continuing to remain in the Zvenigorodka, Mironovka, and Smela region, is tying up the adjacent flanks of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts and holding back their advance to the Southern Bug River…

The *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command assigns the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts the immediate missions of encircling and destroying the enemy grouping in the Zvenigorodka-Mironovka salient by means of a link-up somewhere in the Shpola region by the left-flank units of the 1st Ukrainian Front and the right-flank units of the 2d Ukrainian Front; only such a link-up by the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' forces will provide them with the opportunity of developing the shock force necessary for them to reach the Southern Bug River.

The *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command orders:

1. The main forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front, consisting of the 27th Army, the 5th Guards Tank Corps, and part of the forces of the 40th Army, are directed to seize the Tal'noe and Zvenigorodka line and subsequently advance their mobile units to Shpola…

2. The main forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front, consisting of the 52d Army, the 4th Guards Army, part of the forces of the 53d Army, and no less than two mechanized corps, are directed to capture the Shpola and Novomirgorod line and link up with the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces in the Shpola region.

3. The main aviation forces of both *fronts* are directed to assist the forces in the fulfillment of these missions.

4. Bear in mind that the destruction of the enemy Zvenigorodka-Mironovka grouping will sharply improve our operational situation at the junction of the *fronts,* immediately strengthen both *fronts* considerably, and facilitate our forces' reaching the Southern Bug River…

The *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command

I.STALIN
ANTONOV

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Source: TsAMO SSSR, F. 132-A, Op. 2642, D. 36, LL. 8–9.

2. From a 13 January 1944 Directive of the Commander of 1st Ukrainian Front forces to the Commanders of the 27th and 40th Armies concerning the offensive in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region

In the execution of the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command directive, I am assigning to the left flank of the *front* the immediate missions of reaching and capturing the Tal'noe, Ekaterinopol', and Zvenigorodka region and of occupying Shpola with mobile units, where they will link up with forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front.

The primary mission is to destroy the enemy Zvenigorodka-Mironovka grouping and, while attacking along the axis from Novomirgorod to Shpola, to enclose it with the 2d Ukrainian Front's flank.

I ORDER:

1. From 2400 hours 13 January 1944, establish a boundary line between the 40th and 27th Armies up to Peschanoe, as before, and further, by way of Ploskoe, Krasilovka, Buki, the Gornyi Tikich River, Tal'noe, and Skalevoe. All points besides Skalevoe are inclusive for the 27th Army.

2. Additionally, include the 167th Rifle Division, the 28th Antitank Artillery Brigade, the 269th Antitank Artillery Regiment, the 83d and 88th Guards Mortar Regiment, and the 5th Guards Tank Corps, all from the 40th Army, the 133d Rifle Division from the 104th Rifle Corps, and the 233d Tank Brigade from my reserve in the 27th Army's composition.

3. To the 27th Army commander: without waiting for the arrival of the 133d Rifle Division and the 233d Tank Brigade, continue the offensive with existing forces and with the main grouping on the right flank with the mission of reaching and capturing the Veselyi Kut, Popovka, Murzantsy, Pochapintsy, Dzhurzhentsy, Medvin, and Sinitsa line by the end of 17 January 1944.

On the left flank, continue the offensive in the direction of Mironovka and Boguslav with the forces of the 337th and 206th Rifle Divisions. From the morning of 18 January 1944 additionally commit the 5th Guards Tank Corps, the 233d Tank Brigade, and the 133d Rifle Division into combat on the main axis and, by the end of the day, reach and capture the Tal'noe, Ekaterinopol', Zvenigorodka, and Pochapintsy line with the main infantry force.

Occupy Shpola with mobile forces and firmly hold on to that region until the approach of the 2d Ukrainian Front forces. Upon arrival at the appointed line, dispatch a strong forward detachment from the main force and with it occupy the road junction in the Ol'shana and Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region and cut off the enemy routes of withdrawal to the south.

4. To the 40th Army commander:… The army mission is to firmly hold on to the occupied front. To improve the situation on your flanks, capture the (exclusive) Zhadany, Iastrubintsy, and Podvysokoe line and, simultaneously, on

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

the left flank, in co-operation with the 27th Army, capture the Potash, Mashurov, and (exclusive) Tal'noe line by the end of the day on 14 January. Capture the Iarovatka Station line with forward detachments by the end of the day on 14 January. Conduct reconnaissance to a depth of 20–25 kilometers.

VATUTIN
KRAINIUKOV
BOGOLIUBOV

Source: TsAMO, F. 48-A, Op. 5, D. 509, LL. 313–16.

3. From a 20 January 1944 Directive of the Commander of the 2d Ukrainian Front forces to the Commanders of the 4th Guards, 53d, and 5th Guards Tank Armies concerning the offensive in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region

1. The enemy is continuing to defend opposite the *front's* right wing.

2. The immediate mission of the armies on the *front's* right wing is to penetrate the enemy defense in the Verbovka and Vasil'evka sector, capture the Shpola and Novomirgorod region, link up with the 1st Ukrainian Front's left wing, and encircle and destroy the enemy north of Zvenigorodka and Shpola.

I ORDER:

3. The 4th Guards Army commander to penetrate the enemy's defense in the Verbovka and Balandino sector with a force of seven rifle divisions, including one from the second echelon. At the beginning of the penetration, deliver the main attack with the left flank. Subsequently, envelop Shpola from the north and south in the direction of Sam Gorodok and Shpola.

During the offensive, protect your left flank along the Gniloi Tashlyk River. Capture the Ekaterinopol' and Ositniazhka line by the end of 23 January.

Reach the Kutsovka, Makeevka, and Zhurovka front by the end of 24 January.

4. The 53d Army commander to penetrate the enemy defense in the (exclusive) Balandino and Vasil'evka sector with the forces of seven divisions, including one from the second echelon. Deliver the main attack with your right flank along the Tishkovo, Mezhigorka, and Krymki axis and smash a penetration with the left flank to Panchevo while protecting your left flank along the Bol'shaia Vys' River.

Capture the Ositniazhka, Pisarevka, Kamenovatka, Martonosha, Panchevo, and Kapizh line by the end of 23 January. Reach the Zhuravka, Zlatopol', and Novomirgorod front by the end of 24 January.

Protect the commitment of the 5th Guards Tank Army into the penetration on the first day of the offensive…

5. The 5th Guards Tank Army commander to enter the penetration in the main attack sector of the 53d Army on the first day of the offensive and, while energetically developing the offensive, capture the Zhurovka, Listopadovo, and Tishkovka region by the end of 23 January. Capture Shpola and reach the Shpola, Vasil'evka, Skotorevo, and Krymka region by the end of 24 January by an attack

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

from the south with the mission of cutting off the enemy group's withdrawal routes to the south.

Subsequently, link up with the 1st Ukrainian Front's 5th Guards Tank Corps in the Zvenigorodka region and, together with them, encircle the enemy group on the Shpola and Zvenigorodka line.

KONEV
SUSAIKOV
ZAKHAROV

Source: TsAMO, F. 240, Op. 2769, D. 159a, LL. 210–14.

4. From a 12 February 1944 *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command Directive to the Commanders of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' forces about the liquidation of the German-fascist Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping

In view of the fact that it is necessary to combine the efforts of all forces which are operating with those missions to liquidate the enemy Korsun' grouping and in so far as the great part of those forces belong to the 2d Ukrainian Front, the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command **orders:**

1. Entrust the direction of all forces which are operating against the enemy Korsun' grouping to the 2d Ukrainian Front commander with the mission of destroying the enemy Korsun' grouping in the shortest possible time.

Accordingly, at 2400 hours 12 February 1944, transfer the 27th Army, consisting of the 180th, 337th, and 202d Rifle Divisions, the 54th and 159th Fortified Regions, and all existing reinforcing units to the operational subordination of the 2d Ukrainian Front commander. Leave all types of supply to the 1st Ukrainian Front.

The *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command

I.STALIN
ANTONOV

Source: TsAMO, F. 132-A, Op. 2642, D. 13, LL. 201–02.

5. A 17 February 1944 combat report of the Commander of the 2d Ukrainian Front forces to the High Command about the completion and results of the destruction of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping

I report:

1. While fulfilling YOUR order, on 17 February *front* forces fully routed, destroyed, and, in part, took prisoner the enemy encircled grouping, which consisted of nine infantry and one panzer division, and one panzer grenadier brigade.

2. Our forces successfully repelled all enemy attacks from without to meet the encircled grouping with large enemy personnel and equipment losses.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

3. From 0300 through 0600 hours on 17 February, the enemy, with the remnants of the forces of his encircled group, consisting of up to 8–10,000 men, up to 5–7 artillery batteries, and 12–15 tanks, began to break out on the Komarovka and Khil'ki front in the defensive sector of the 27th Army's 180th Rifle Division and spread to the west and southwest in the direction of Dzhurzhentsy and Pochapintsy. According to the testimony of prisoners, the 72d and 112th Infantry Divisions were assigned to the head of the penetrating enemy columns.

4. *Front* forces, consisting of the 52d, 4th Guards, and the 27th Army and part of the forces of the 5th Guards Tank Army and the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps, were exploiting the offensive. As a result, the enemy who were penetrating into the depth of our dispositions were broken up into separate groups, destroyed, and, in part, taken prisoner…

The enemy completely abandoned all of his equipment and weaponry. Enemy trophies and losses will be clarified by additional reports…

KONEV
SUSAIKOV
ZAKHAROV

Source: TsAMO, F. 240, Op. 2779, D. 1020, LL. 189–92.

Note: All documents are contained in 'Korsun'-Shevchenkovskaia operatsiia v dokumentakh (24 ianvaria-17 fevralia 1944 g.)' (The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation in Documents, 24 January-17 February 1944), *Voenno-istoricheskiii zhurnal* [Military-Historical Journal], No. 2 (February 1984), 41–5.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 2: Creation of the 6th Tank Army and its Operations in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

CREATION OF THE 6TH TANK ARMY

…At the height of a staff officer's meeting, a report arrived, which was from the *front* staff and was addressed to the commander of the 5th Mechanized Corps. It stated that a 6th Tank Army would be formed on the basis of a 20 January decision by the *Stavka* of the High Command…[The tank army] would include the 5th Guards Tank Corps and the 5th Mechanized Corps. Guards Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces A.G.Kravchenko was appointed army commander, Major-General G.L.Tumanian a Member of the Military Council [commissar], and Major-General of Tank Forces D.I.Zaev chief of staff…

By the beginning of 1944, the 5th Mechanized Corps, which had been formed in September-November 1942, had already established a glorious combat record, having taken part in Southwestern and Western Front offensive operations. The corps arrived in the Ukraine from the Naro-Fominsk region in December 1943 after being brought up to full strength in personnel and equipment. From 1 through 12 January 1944, the corps was hurriedly sent forward by rail. It unloaded in the Fastov and Kazatin sector. Then its units completed a march and concentrated in the region 60 kilometers south of Belaia Tserkov'.

On 20 January 1944, the 5th Mechanized Corps consisted of four brigades: the 2d, 9th, and 45th Mechanized Brigades and the 233d Tank Brigade, as well as a full complement of corps units.[1] From the moment it joined the 1st Ukrainian Front, all of the corps' formations and units were at almost full strength although it lacked its required [internal] combat co-ordination. Necessary co-ordination was also absent in the command and control of the brigades since a number of its commanders had been replaced, and the corps had still not had time to become familiar with its new command cadre. It knew Major A.P.Babenko well since he had commanded the 9th Mechanized Brigade continuously since 1942. It was still not clear, however, how Colonel S.D.Mironov, the newly appointed commander of the 2d Mechanized Brigade, would prove his worth.

The corps was familiar with General Volkov [the 5th Mechanized Corps commander] and the senior experienced commander of the 45th Mechanized Brigade, Colonel M.V.Shutov. But for the general [Volkov], the designated

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

commander of the 233d Tank Brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel A.A. Chernushevich, remained an enigma.

The corps commander noted with great regret that the 233d Tank Brigade and, in part, the 45th Mechanized Brigade and subunits of the other brigades had been thrown into combat from the march, and this had contributed to the dissipation of their forces and the loss of a large number of their tanks on the eve of the important operation on the Right Bank of the Ukraine. And this had contradicted the instructions of the commander of the Red Army's Armored Forces, General Ia. N.Fedorenko, to employ the corps compactly to resolve large-scale operational-tactical missions. 'Employ the tanks massively, and in no instance disperse the tanks', warned Moscow beforehand…

At first, the 5th Guards Stalingrad—Kiev Corps was designated the 4th Tank [Corps]. It had been formed in April 1942.

Since January 1943 the corps had conducted offensive combat along the Gorshechnoe and Kastornoe axis. In co-operation with forces of the Briansk Front, at Kastornoe it had closed the encirclement ring around the enemy Voronezh grouping.[2]

The guards—tankers had struggled heroically in the Kursk bulge and along the Dnepr. They had forced the great water obstacles of the Desna and Dnepr Rivers under water during the cold fall weather. While waging fierce combat to enlarge the Liutezh bridgehead on the right bank of the Dnepr, they had participated with the 38th Army's forces in the liberation of Kiev and the pursuit of the enemy along the Vasil'kov and Belaia Tserkov' axis. For outstanding operations in the battles for Kiev, the 5th Guards Tank Corps was awarded the new honorific name 'Kiev'…

At the end of the meeting, General Kravchenko reported that Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces and Hero of the Soviet Union V.M.Alekseev had been appointed commander of the 5th Guards Tank Corps…

On 23 January the army chief of staff, General D.I.Zaev, reported to the commander that, in accordance with the decision of the 1st Ukrainian Front commander, a group of 20 *front* staff officers and a signal battalion from the *front's* rear services directorate would arrive in the 6th Tank Army to work in the headquarters on preparations for the forthcoming operation. In addition, a partially filled out army headquarters and political department, headed by the deputy chief of staff, Colonel M.M.Radzikevich, and the chief of the army political department, V.M.Zelenkov, would be sent from Moscow.

Having listened attentively to the army chief of staff, the general briefly informed him about the army missions in the forthcoming operations and the period for their fulfillment. Having remained somewhat silent for a while, he added:

> There is no army headquarters. Therefore, the command and control of army forces will be carried out for the present through the 5th Guards Tank Corps' headquarters. Our principal mission is to prepare the forces for a

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

great feat within the shortest period of time and to form an army headquarters capable of controlling the forces of a tank army during the course of the operation.

IN THE KORSUN'-SHEVCHENKOVSKII SALIENT

During the first meeting with General Volkov, the army commander did not indicate the exact time for the beginning of the operation to destroy the large grouping of enemy forces. The corps commander understood, however, that a total of several days would be spent on its preparation. There was much to accomplish. The brigades still had not been fully concentrated in their regions. Many subunits were conducting combat operations in the 40th Army's defensive sector, and vehicular transport carrying fuel, ammunition, and provisions was stuck along the roads.

Commanders, political workers, and staff and rear service officers were situated on the march routes day and night, organizing the moving of the vehicular columns to their places of concentration.

Soon the arriving headquarters departments of the 6th Tank Army began the laborious work of preparing for the operation. The chief of reconnaissance studied the enemy and analyzed the possible actions of his reserves. Communications officers gathered and disseminated extensive information about the combat preparedness of their own forces. All the information flowed together in the army headquarters. There, it was studied and disseminated, and the most important information was reported to the army commander.

Finally, the time came when the commander considered all the 'fors' and 'againsts'. Out of all of these diverse 'fors' and 'againsts', the army commander had to determine finally the most important considerations and make a decision. At first, only he himself knew that decision, but later it became known by his closest assistants and immediate executors who would bring it into full realization.

During this period, a special sort of secrecy prevailed in the corps headquarters. All awaited the instructions of their leaders, by which it would be possible to become familiar with the essence of what was forthcoming. Each officer, in and of himself, tried to divine the plans of his senior leaders. Unusual interest was displayed in the map, which portrayed the overall situation in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient. Only later, however, did the secrecy of the event reveal its solution.

Situation in the salient

While wishing to maintain the prestige of the Hitlerite command after the unsuccessful battles in the so-called impregnable Dnepr Wall, fascist propaganda incessantly continued to claim that the Russian victory on the Right Bank of the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Ukraine was a temporary matter, and that Kiev would be recovered in the near future.

The fascist command planned to deliver a blow from Kanev southward along the right bank of the Dnepr. They intended to cut off from the Dnepr the 2d Ukrainian Front's armies which had successfully forced the river in the Zaporozh'e and Dnepropetrovsk regions and had thereafter pushed toward the west.

The Soviet command well understood the danger posed by the fascist forces' salient in the Kanev region. The total area of the salient was around 10,000 square kilometers. Its width at the base reached 130 kilometers. The danger lay in the fact that, with its many large and small population points, it was strongly broken up by small rivers, streams, and deep gullies.

Here, the Hitlerite command created a firm defense which relied upon the difficult terrain sectors.

One should note that the enemy in the immediate vicinity of the salient lacked any large reserves. However, reserves were situated not far from it. The enemy had moved up as many as five panzer divisions to the region west and northwest of Kirovograd, and three of his panzer divisions were already operating southwest of Okhmatova. The Hitlerite command reckoned on completing its concentration and preparing for offensive operations by those forces located in the Kirovograd and Slovom region in the near future. The situation was such that one could not linger in the liquidation of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient.

On 12 January 1944, the *Stavka* of the High Command assigned to the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' forces the mission of encircling and destroying the German-fascist forces in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient region. To do so it was necessary to launch meeting blows against the base of the salient and, while linking up in the Shpola and Zvenigorodka regions, to encircle and then destroy this enemy grouping.

In mid-January 1944, when forces of the Leningrad and Volkhov Fronts were penetrating the enemy defense and raising the blockade of Leningrad, the forces of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts were urgently preparing for the next powerful attack on the German-fascist invaders.

The winter of 1943–44 was unstable: now heavy snow fell, now icy winds blew which knocked one off one's feet, and now thaws set in and it poured with rain. The fields and roads were completely soaked and washed away. All of this severely hindered the offensive by our forces. Furthermore, the Hitlerite General Staff expected the offensive only after the arrival of stable cold weather or in the spring, after the earth had dried out. Overcoming the weather, however, Soviet forces completed their regrouping and brought up the necessary materiel supplies, while commanders, party workers, and staffs carried out immense work with the troops.

The difficulties were even greater for the 6th Tank Army's Military Council because it was necessary for the army to plan and prepare for the upcoming offensive in an extremely short period of time.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The 6th Tank Army's formations and units managed to concentrate in the Tynovka, Krasilovka, Besedka, and Bashtechka region only by 25 January 1944. By that time the army had 160 tanks and 59 self-propelled artillery pieces.[3] Of this number, 54 tanks and 4 76mm self-propelled guns were in the tank corps, and 106 tanks and 46 self-propelled guns were in the mechanized corps.

The personnel complement of the mechanized corps was at almost full strength and possessed all rifle and artillery weapons required by TO&E [establishment]. The tank corps suffered from a considerable personnel shortage in their motorized rifle and artillery subunits. Replenishment took place during the immediate preparations for the offensive. Many soldiers lacked combat experience and were poorly trained. In the operating armies, replenishment went on from only the liberated regions of the Ukraine. While they [the replacements] greatly desired to strike the hated enemy, they were insufficiently trained to do so.

At that time the tank corps' motorized rifle brigade [the 6th] was still fighting in encirclement in the Rizino region. Apart from anything else, the army was to operate in the offensive sector of the 40th Combined-Arms Army, whose divisions were severely weakened by previous battles, and the enemy along the army's axis still maintained a rather strong grouping. He was defending with the units of three infantry divisions and one panzer division.

The limited period available for preparing the forces for the forthcoming offensive caused anxiety on the part of the army commander. His plan called for the preparation of forces for an attack by the entire army along a single axis. However, the time for beginning the operation was important, if not decisive, for the successful outcome of the forthcoming operation. In this regard a 23 January 1944 order from Army General N.F.Vatutin, the commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces, assigned the army the mission 'In co-operation with the units of the 40th Army's 104th Rifle Corps, penetrate the enemy defense along the Pavlovka and Krasnyi line, enter the penetration, and exploit the offensive in the general direction of Zvenigorodka.'

To fulfill the assigned mission, the army had to carry out the encirclement of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping by means of a decisive attack in co-operation with the 2d Ukrainian Front's force.

According to General Kravchenko's decision, the 5th Mechanized Corps, in co-operation with units of the 104th Rifle Corps, was to penetrate the enemy defense along the Marker 232 (1 kilometer south of Tynovka) and 238.3 line and, while exploiting the attack in the general direction of Shubennyi Stav, to capture Shubennyi Stav by the end of the first day and reach the Shpola region by the end of the second day.

The 5th Guards Tank Corps with its attached units received the mission of entering the penetration once the rifle divisions of the 104th Rifle Corps had reached the Serebrania *balka* line and reaching the Kobylaiki and Malaia Ryzhanovka region by the end of the first day and the Shpola region by the end of the second day.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The army commander's reserve consisted of the 5th Mechanized Corps' 233d Tank Brigade and 1228th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiment.

Apart from the missions in the army's offensive sector, it [the reserve] had a special task. As Army General N.F.Vatutin, the *front* commander, had directed General Kravchenko beforehand, in the event of success in one of the *front* sectors, it was to operate directly toward Zvenigorodka.

Thus, the main army shock grouping was on the right flank in the form of the 5th Guards Tank Corps, which was to be committed into combat through the offensive sector of the 58th Rifle Division to exploit success from behind the right flank of the 5th Mechanized Corps.

The commander's plan was not simply to echelon his forces but to create a force grouping with the definite intention to maintain a compact grouping of all army forces for developing the attack into the depth and encircling the opposing enemy force. The 5th Mechanized Corps had to penetrate the defense and create the necessary conditions for the exploitation of success into the depth, and, to exploit success, the 5th Guards Tank Corps was to enter battle from behind the right flank of the 5th Mechanized Corps, rather than through its combat formations.

After the assignment of missions by corps, intensive work went on in the brigades to prepare personnel, equipment, and weaponry for the offensive with the maximum exploitation of the limited time available. On 23 and 24 January, the commanders of the army's formations and units carefully studied the terrain and organized co-operation with the units of the 40th Army's 104th and 47th Rifle Corps…

Encirclement of the enemy

After a 40-minute artillery preparation, on the morning of 26 January the brigades of the 6th Tank Army's 5th Mechanized Corps launched the attack simultaneously with the forces of the 40th Army. The offensive developed slowly. The enemy's system of defensive fires had not been suppressed to the required degree during the period of the artillery preparation, and, therefore, the brigades suffered heavy personnel and tank losses in the struggle for strong points.

By 1700 hours the 5th Mechanized Corps had succeeded in penetrating the first enemy defense line on a front of 10 kilometers and had advanced into the depth of the enemy's dispositions. In spite of the slow advance tempo, the corps' brigades captured a number of important points on the first day of combat operations.

Because the 58th Rifle Division had not penetrated the enemy's defense during the first half of the day, the commander of the 5th Guards Tank Corps ordered his brigades to 'complete the penetration' of the enemy's first defensive line and to exploit success themselves. However, the corps encountered heavy enemy resistance in the region of Marker 232, which exploited favorable

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

defensive terrain and, while suffering great tank losses, was unable to advance further.

Meanwhile, the *front* Military Council demanded that the army and corps commanders carry out the missions of successfully and rapidly encircling the enemy. At the same time, to seize Zvenigorodka as rapidly as possible, it anticipated exploiting the success of the neighbor on the left—the forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front, which had launched their offensive on 25 January and had advanced in sustained combat toward Zvenigorodka from the southeast.

Army General N.F.Vatutin, the 1st Ukrainian Front commander, and Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K.Zhukov, the *Stavka* representative, demanded that the tank army's Military Council immediately commit a mobile detachment into action through Lysianka toward Zvenigorodka, where it would signal the success of the attacking forces. The 233d Tank Brigade, with an attached self-propelled artillery regiment, a motorized rifle battalion, and an antitank artillery battery, constituted the basis of this detachment. In total the detachment numbered 55 tanks and self-propelled guns, 4 antitank guns, and 200 automatic-weapons men mounted on the tanks and self-propelled guns.

The enterprising and decisive deputy commander of the 5th Mechanized Corps, Major-General of Tank Forces M.I.Savel'ev, was appointed to command the detachment. The detachment's mission was to avoid combat for separate strong points and penetrate to link up with forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front.

On the morning of 27 January, while enveloping the strong point of Malyi Vinograd from the north, in heavy fighting the detachment's subunits reached the village of Tikhonovka, where they helped the units of the 136th Rifle Division and the 5th Guards Tank Corps' 6th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, which had been fighting in encirclement since 10 January, to escape from encirclement. Immediately thereafter, the detachment continued to fulfill its assigned mission.

Repelling and pressing back small enemy groups, at 2400 hours the detachment captured the operationally and tactically important point of Lysianka. At 0800 hours the next day, the detachment resumed its attack toward Zvenigorodka. During these battles, Lieu tenant-General of Tank Forces A.D. Shtebnev, the commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front's armored forces, suffered a heroic death with several officers of his operational group, which was moving forward behind the combat formations of General Savel'ev's detachment.

On the morning of 27 January, the army's main forces continued their attack along the previous axes. The commander demanded that the forces operate more decisively, penetrate more boldly between the enemy's strong points, and, whenever possible, bypass them and decisively penetrate through the depth of the enemy's dispositions.

The offensive resumed early in the morning. The tempo of advance, however, continued to remain low. The Germans offered stubborn resistance and counterattacked with tanks and infantry.

By the end of the day, army forces had advanced 10–15 kilometers while suffering considerable personnel and equipment losses.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Given such an offensive tempo, the enemy had sufficient freedom to maneuver his immediate reserves. Therefore, it was important not to let the initiative slip from our hands. Consequently, great hope was placed on the successful operations of General Savel'ev's detachment.

The complicated situation forced the army commander to halt his offensive on the night of 28 January in order to conduct some regroupings and to deliver an attack in the morning with his army's main forces along the axis where the detachment had achieved success.

However, an order was received from the *front* headquarters to withdraw the 5th Mechanized Corps' brigades from the offensive sector of the 40th Army's 104th Rifle Corps. They were now to complete a 100-kilometer march to the southwest of the attack region, concentrate in the Staryi and Novyi Zhivotin region by the end of 28 January, and be prepared to repel enemy tank attacks east of Vinnitsa. At the same time, the mission of attacking decisively toward Zvenigorodka was not canceled.

The complexity of the situation rested in the fact that the command and control of army forces was made considerably more difficult. The integrity of the forces' operations was disrupted. It was now necessary to ensure control of forces which were operating along diverse axes in three groupings, each of which had its own special missions. But the main point was that this army, even if created temporarily, did not lose its importance as a single large tank formation.

In this situation, however, the army commander primarily left his original decision in force and made only several corrections to it. He provided for the delivery of an attack by the entire 5th Guards Tank Corps and development of the success achieved by General Savel'ev's detachment.

Early on the morning of 28 January, General Savel'ev's detachment continued its successful offensive from Lysianka toward Zvenigorodka. By 1300 hours the 233d Tank Brigade's tanks had penetrated into Zvenigorodka from the northwest and had begun street battles. By that time the forward tank subunits of the 20th Tank Corps' 155th Tank Brigade from the 5th Guards Tank Army were entering the town from the southeast. Not more than an hour had passed before the brave *tankists* [tankers] of the forward brigades of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Front's tank armies met in the center of Zvenigorodka… Together, the *tankists* of both *fronts* occupied an all-round defense with a firm resolve to hold on to Zvenigorodka until the approach of the main forces.

The aim of the operation had been achieved, and the encirclement of the large enemy grouping in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient had been completed.

However, the destruction of the enemy force which had fallen into encirclement was no easy matter. The enemy threw in large forces to rescue the encircled force. It was necessary to hold them in check and bleed them white. On that day of 28 January, the 5th Mechanized Corps with its attachments was temporarily subordinated to the 40th Army.

The corps' mechanized brigades completed their march and maneuver, which extended a distance of more than 100 kilometers, in exceptionally bad weather

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

conditions. Heavy wet snow with rain occurred, and the brigades almost completely lacked vehicular transport for the movement of their motorized rifle subunit personnel. Therefore, they had to complete the march on foot. The motorized infantry subunits were moved with full combat kits, and the infantry was in felt boots and sheepskin coats. However in spite of everything, within days the subunits overcame the distance from Malyi Vinograd to Staryi Zhibotin and concentrated in their designated regions in readiness to repel enemy tank attacks.

At that time, having learned about the approach of Soviet forces, the enemy refrained from further attacks along that axis and, in a number of sectors, the 5th Mechanized Corps itself attacked him and achieved some limited success. On the third day after its arrival, the corps received a new mission—to concentrate in the Tynovka, Pavlovka, and Malyi Vinograd sector. Once again, it had to complete a difficult 100-kilometer march in bad weather and a strong thaw.

While the 5th Mechanized Corps was temporarily subordinated to the 40th Army, the *front* Military Council transferred the 47th Rifle Corps, which at that time was occupying a defense along the external encirclement front alongside the brigades of the 5th Guards Tank Corps, to the operational subordination of the 6th Tank Army. By 29 January the 6th Tank Army's forces had already firmly occupied defenses along the following lines: the 5th Guards Tank Corps from Kobyliaki to Tynovka, and the 47th Rifle Corps from Serebrianaia *balka* through Vodianiki to Budyshche. The external front stood 25 kilometers from the internal encirclement front, but there were days when this distance shrank to 10 kilometers. The principal mission of the 6th Tank Army's forces was to prevent penetration of the enemy from without to the encircled grouping.

During the last days of January, having regrouped his forces, the enemy undertook counterstrokes and counterattacks from without in order to link up with his encircled grouping. There were also reconnaissances in force and raids to find the most vulnerable places in the defenses of the 6th Tank Army's forces. However, from 4 February on the enemy began powerful attacks with the clear intention of linking up with his encircled forces. Sometimes the enemy threw up to 200 tanks and two infantry regiments into combat, supported by artillery fire and massed air strikes.

Fierce battles developed in the regions of the villages of Pavlovka, Repki, and Borisovka. Here, army forces managed to repel the enemy attacks only by the most intensive efforts. More than once the threat of enemy tank penetration was impending. It was necessary to hold off the furious enemy attacks.

By the end of 3 February, the 5th Mechanized Corps had arrived in the Zhabinka and Iablonovka region from the Staryi and Novyi Zhibotin region. This once again encouraged the army's troopers.

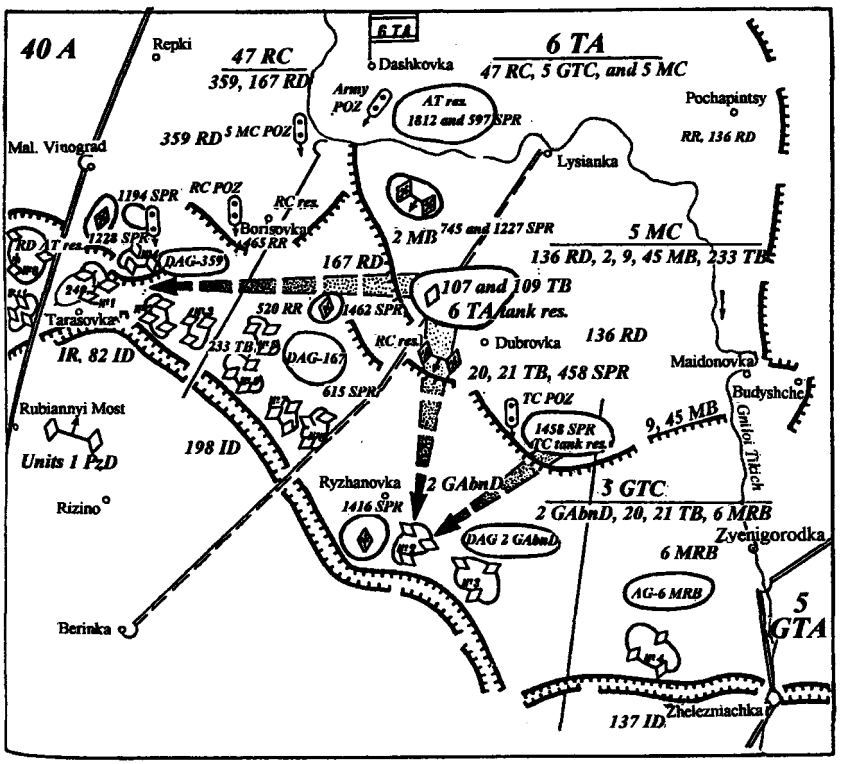
The enemy continued to strain his way to the north. He had large forces available. Therefore, immense persistence and maneuverability were required on the part of army forces. For that purpose, the return of the 5th Mechanized Corps was opportune. It was assigned the mission of occupying a defense along the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Malyi Vinograd, Bosovka, and Iablonovka line in immediate proximity to the forward edge of the external front.

The enemy concentrated up to five divisions, including three panzer divisions, in the 6th Tank Army's defensive sector. The Hitlerites tried at all costs to provide help to their encircled forces.

At the end of January and in the first half of February 1944, the Hitlerite command launched persistent attempts to penetrate the external encirclement front. At first this occurred in the 2d Ukrainian Front's sector and, then, in the Rizino region of the 1st Ukrainian Front. Enemy forces tried by launching powerful tank strikes in the direction of Lysianka to break through the Soviet forces' defenses and unite with the encircled forces. Simultaneously, the command of the encircled enemy group assembled a significant force in the



Map 12. Organization of the 6th Tank Army's defense on 4 February 1944

Stebnev region (on the southern face of the 'cauldron') for an attack through Shenderovka to Lysianka to link up with the panzer division, which was launching a strong attack from south to north against the outer encirclement (see Map 12).

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

In this situation, having exhausted all of its strengths by counterattacks while on the defense, the 6th Tank Army was entrusted with the mission of repulsing all enemy attacks. From 4 through 10 February, the sustained and fierce battles of the 6th Tank Army continued as it warded off the powerful enemy onslaughts. The Hitlerites threw more than 250 tanks and self-propelled guns, primarily 'Tigers' and 'Ferdinands', simultaneously into the attack on a narrow front sector. However, they did not achieve their aim. To assist the 6th Tank Army, the 2d Tank Army under the command of Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces S.I.Bogdanov, was moved up from the 1st Ukrainian Front's reserve.

Early on the morning on 11 February, after a strong artillery and air preparation, the Hitlerites threw a large number of tanks which were echeloned in the depth into the attack against the defensive sector of one of the 47th Rifle Corps' rifle divisions. The defender's combat formation was crushed by the enemy. By the end of the day, 150 enemy tanks had managed to penetrate through Bosovka into the Buzhanka and Frankovka region. One more such spurt would be sufficient for them to reach the rear area of the Soviet forces who were fighting along the internal front of the encircled enemy. However, the tank brigades of the 5th Guards Tank Corps, together with the 47th Rifle Corps' units, held off the penetrating enemy tanks. The enemy lost 65 combat vehicles in these battles and gave up further operations toward the north.

At this time, the 5th Mechanized Corps launched an attack from the east in the direction of Lysianka, Bosovka, and Malyi Vinograd against the base of the penetrating enemy, and the enemy was forced to withdraw, having abandoned many tanks and self-propelled guns, which had become stuck in the mud.

However, after several attacks, on 13 February the enemy once again captured Malyi Vinograd, and a force of up to 60 tanks struck against Bosovka and Lysianka, temporarily pressing back units of the 47th Rifle Corps and 6th Tank Army. Soon, however, he was once again thrown back by approaching 2d Tank Army units.

From 14 through 24 February, combat of only local significance occurred in the 6th Tank Army's defensive sector. The 6th Tank Army's formations, together with the formations of the 2d Tank Army, finally stabilized the defensive front, and, soon after having completed the liquidation of the encircled enemy grouping, were withdrawn into the *front* second echelon.

Thus, thanks to the decisive measures undertaken by Soviet commanders and the heroic actions of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' forces, the enemy was dealt a fresh shattering blow. The soldiers of the 6th Tank Army's units and subunits displayed combat skill and exemplary courage. The *tankists* of the 233d Tank Brigade, which made up the backbone of the mobile detachment and played a decisive role in fulfilling the principal mission of the 6th Tank Army during the first stage of the operation, operated especially audaciously. The commanders of the 233d Tank Brigade's battalions, Captain I.N.Masliukov, who fell in battle at Zvenigorodka, the brave Captain I.G.Gus'kov, and deputy

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

brigade commander, Lieutenant-Colonel N.M.Mikhno, operated decisively during the detachment's raid.

The soldiers of all army formations and units displayed exceptional courage and heroism during the penetration of the enemy's defense on 26 and 27 January, but the soldiers who operated along the external encirclement front of the enemy Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping especially distinguished themselves…

While repelling an enemy attack attempting to assist the encircled grouping, a tank crew from the 22d Guards Tank Brigade under the command of Communist Lieutenant A.M.Fadin showed exceptional steadfastness, resourcefulness, and initiative.

While fighting in the region of Lysianka, the *tankists* of that crew destroyed three fascist tanks, crushed a six-barreled mortar [a *Nebelwerfer*], two machine-guns with their crews, and several vehicles, and captured 18 soldiers. They also destroyed a German-fascist transport aircraft which was trying to take off after landing by mistake in the combat area.

While leading subunits of his battalion in combat in the region of the village of Bosovka, Guards Captain Iaumov, the deputy commander of the 21st Guards Tank Brigade, organized the successful repulsion of three enemy attacks and personally destroyed four fascist tanks with one of his tank crews.[4]

In the village of Repki, the artillerymen of one of the 5th Mechanized Corps' batteries under the command of Communist Lieutenant S.Muratov beat off an enemy attack and all perished in that battle together with the battery commander. However, the enemy tanks did not get through.

In combat on 13 February, Guards Sergeant Ia.V.Ostrov, a gun commander of a tank destroyer battery of the 6th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, organized the repulsion of an attack on his positions by 11 tanks and a battalion of enemy infantry. He personally destroyed two enemy medium tanks.

A tank crew from the 22d Guards Tank Brigade (commanded by Colonel I.K.Ostanenko) under the command of Junior Lieutenant I.V.Kiselev fought fierce battles with fascist artillery and infantry in the vicinity of Taranza village and destroyed two antitank guns, three sub-machine guns, and two mortar crews.

While fighting on the approaches to the village of Buzhanka on 11 February, Junior Lieutenant D.E.Nesterov, the commander of a tank platoon, destroyed up to 25 Hitlerite soldiers and officers and a 'Ferdinand' self-propelled gun with fire from his tank alone. Nesterov was wounded in the battle, but he did not abandon the field of battle and he continued to command his platoon…

The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation was an example of the encirclement and complete destruction of a large enemy grouping which was equipped with all types of combat equipment and of maneuver operations of tank units and subunits of Soviet tank armies, including the 6th Tank Army under the command of the experienced *tankist* General A.G.Kravchenko.

By a skillful and decisive maneuver, the army successfully fulfilled the mission of participating in the encirclement of the enemy Korsun'-

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Shevchenkovskii grouping and the struggle with his forces along the external front. While speaking about the events during the war on the Eastern Front in his book, *The History of the Second World War,* the Hitlerite General Kurt Tippelskirch was forced to recognize that the wedges of Russians, which were attacking from the north and south, closed in the Zvenigorodka region on 28 January. Two German corps found themselves in a 'cauldron' despite the repeated attempts of the Hitlerite command to save the encircled forces by the concentrated attacks of eight panzer divisions against the external encirclement front. However, the final attempt to break out from encirclement on the night of 17 February failed to bring success to the Hitlerite forces, and, abandoning all of their heavy weapons, artillery, and a great quantity of their kit, the encircled corps were forced to break out from encirclement by a desperate lunge. But by now this was the agony of the survivors of the forces' defeat. And the Hitlerite General Tippelskirch confessed, 'In the final analysis, this battle again brought heavy losses in personnel and equipment.'[5]

Speaking about the defeat in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation in his book, *Panzer Battles, 1939–1945,* another former fascist general, F. Mellinthin, tries to explain it by the stubbornness of Hitler, who resolutely insisted on holding on to the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient. [Mellinthin wrote], 'A new Stalingrad turned out to be the result of such a decision…'[6] However, first and foremost, this [victory] gave notice of the obvious superiority of Soviet military art and the combat spirit of Soviet forces.

In spite of the difficult conditions of the thaw and the instability of the winter of 1943–44 in the Ukraine, the 6th Tank Army's formations successfully carried out complex maneuvers. During the battles of encirclement and the repulsion of the enemy attacks on the external front, the 6th Tank Army's units captured and destroyed 379 tanks and self-propelled guns, 207 artillery pieces, and 62 armored transporters and crushed up to two enemy panzer and one enemy infantry division.[7]

The army's command cadre gained rich experience in the conduct of combat operations in difficult thaw conditions and extremely unstable weather. This experience was exploited during the conduct of subsequent combat operations right up to the war's end.

Source: G.T.Zavizion and P.A.Korniushin, *I na Tikhom okeane…: Voenno-istoricheskii ocherk o boevom put' 6-i gvardeiskoi tankovoi armii* (In the Pacific Ocean Too…: A Military-Historical Survey of the Combat Path of the 6th Guards Tank Army) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1967), 7–29.

NOTES

1. [Ed.] The 233d Tank Brigade and most of the 5th Mechanized Corps tank regiments were equipped with Sherman tanks. For details see Dmitriy Loza,

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Commanding the Red Army's Sherman Tanks (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 8–23.

2. [Ed.] In the Voronezh-Kastronoe operation of January-February 1943, forces of the Briansk and Voronezh Front had severely damaged the German Second Army and forced the Germans to withdraw westward through Kursk.
3. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 339, Op. 5179, D. 86, L. 443.
4. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 5187, D. 12, L. 5.
5. K.Tippelskirch, *Istoriia vtoroi mirovoi voiny* (A History of the Second World War) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury, 1956), 355.
6. See Mellinthin, *Tankovye srazheniia, 1939–1945* (Panzer Battles, 1939–1945) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury, 1957), 228.
7. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 339, Op. 5179, D. 96, L. 250.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 3:
The Role of the 5th Guards Tank Army in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

1.

As a result of the successful offensive by the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front to the southwest of Kiev and by the 2d Ukrainian Front along the Kirovograd axis, the front lines were pushed far to the west. However, our forces could not link up their flanks west of the Dnepr; the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient prevented this.

The persistence with which the Nazis continued to strengthen their defense in this region was not accidental. While operating from it, they counted on exploiting the salient in order to throw our forces back from their bridgehead on the right bank of the Dnepr and once again re-establish a defensive front along that line.

The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient was defended by the forces of the German First Panzer and Eighth Armies. By the beginning of the offensive, ten divisions and brigades were located in the region.

The main defensive belt in the salient was 5–6 kilometers deep and consisted of a system of strong points and centers of resistance. The approaches to these were protected by mine fields and barbed-wire obstacles. With their steep banks, the streams, rivers, and gullies were also series obstacles. The majority of populated points were adapted for defense.

Weather conditions played a significant role in the calculations of the German-fascist command. In this year, wintertime in the Ukraine turned out to be warm. On individual days in January, the temperature rose to 5–8 degrees. Often the thaw was accompanied by impassable roads, which made the movement of forces and combat equipment off the roads and even along the roads very difficult.

In the middle of January 1944, the *Stavka* of the High Command assigned the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts the mission of encircling and destroying the enemy's Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping. To do so, the forces situated on the *fronts'* adjoining wings were to deliver powerful attacks against the base of the salient and link up in the Shpola region (see Map 13).

The 1st Ukrainian Front's forces were to launch their main attack in the general direction of Zvenigorodka and Shpola. According to the 2d Ukrainian

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Front commander's decision, two combined-arms armies (the 53d and 4th Guards) and the 5th Guards Tank Army were enlisted to fulfill this mission.

The combined-arms armies constituted the first echelon. They were to attack from the Balandino region in the general direction of Shpola and Zvenigorodka. The 5th Guards Tank Army was designated to exploit the combined-arms armies' success along the main axis.

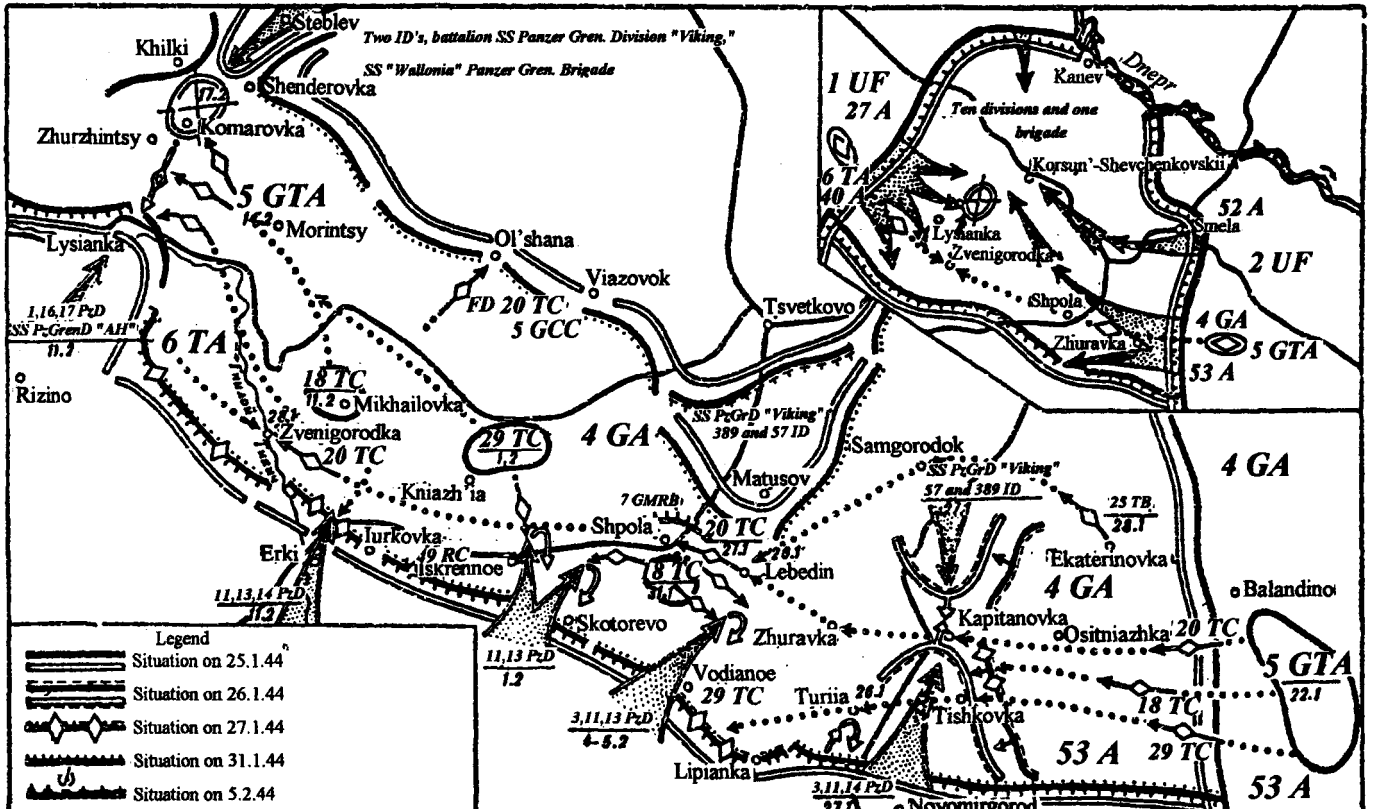
In view of the limited quantity of tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces in the rifle formations, besides developing success into the depth of the enemy's defense, the 5th Guards Tank Army received the mission of penetrating the enemy's defense jointly with the forces of the 53d Army. By the end of the first day of the operation, the tank army was supposed to capture the Zhuravka and Tishkovka region and, by the end of the second day, the Shpola region. At the same time, it would cut off the enemy's withdrawal routes from the north. By the end of the third day, it was to reach the Zvenigorodka region, where it would link up with the 1st Ukrainian Front's mobile forces, the 6th Tank Army, and complete the encirclement of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping.[1] Before the link-up with the 6th Tank Army in the Zvenigorodka region, around 75 kilometers of running battle were in prospect for our *tankists*.

The preparations for the operation were conducted over a short period of time. As soon as the armies were withdrawn from battle in the Kirovograd region, they were transferred to the new region. The *front* command strove to do everything possible to deceive the enemy regarding the true purpose of the 5th Guards Tank Army regrouping. It was quite obvious that the high advance tempo called for in the forthcoming operation—25 kilometers or more per day—could be ensured only if the Germans were prevented from transferring the divisions, which were located west of Kirovograd, into our army's offensive sector. Our command decided to simulate an armored concentration near Kirovograd. To that end, five false concentration regions were created in the region east of Kirovograd simulating the deployment of large tank and artillery formations. Sappers [combat engineers] prepared and set up 126 mock-up tanks and 36 mock-up artillery pieces. The 31st Tank Brigade was entrusted with simulating the movement of tank units in this region.

Rifle divisions allocated radio stations and deployed them where the tank armies had previously been located. These radio stations worked with the same frequencies and at the same time as the tank units' radio stations. The 5th Guards Tank Army headquarters prepared the texts of false combat orders, operational summaries, reports, and other combat documents, whose contents talked about the concentration of a large number of tanks and other combat equipment.

The movement of the brigades into their new concentration region was completed exclusively at night while observing strict light-discipline measures. To cover up the sounds of moving equipment, the march routes passed 20–30 kilometers from the forward edge, artillery firing was conducted, and tractors with their mufflers removed worked earnestly in the false regions. Although we did not manage to hide the army regrouping completely, the German-fascist

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 13. Combat operations of the 5th Guards Tank Army in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (January–February 1944)

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

command was disoriented regarding the axis of the 2d Ukrainian Front's attack, and, right up to the second day of the offensive, it retained its panzer divisions on the Kirovograd axis and repeatedly bombed the Soviet forces' false concentration regions.

When the tank corps had arrived in their new concentration regions south-east of Balandino, the army headquarters immediately organized careful reconnaissance. The intelligence department deployed observation points and created reconnaissance groups which had to detect the weakest spots in the enemy's defenses.

Such a place was discovered in the region south of Balandino. It became well known that the Germans had established a dense belt of tripled-coil barbed wire in front of the forward edge and had heavily mined the approaches to the forward edge. Knowing well German tactics, one could assume that their forces here were few in number and that they hoped to protect [this sector] with engineer structures and obstacles.

After a careful personal reconnaissance of the terrain, General Rotmistrov reached a decision and assigned his corps commanders missions, which were confirmed on 21 January by written combat orders.

The operational formation of the army consisted of two echelons. The 20th and 29th Tank Corps were in the first echelon, and the 18th Tank Corps was in the second.

The army commander retained the 689th Antitank Artillery Regiment and the 76th Guards Mortar Regiment under his control.[2]

The 20th Tank Corps was assigned the mission of attacking in the sector of the 53d Army's 26th Rifle Corps and, while developing the offensive in the direction of Zhuravka, of capturing this point by the end of the first day, having advanced its forward detachment into the Lebedin region. The 29th Tank Corps received the mission of attacking in the 75th Rifle Corps' operational sector on the left flank of the 20th Tank Corps, securing the Turiia region by the end of the first day, and advancing its forward detachment in the direction of Lipianka. Attacking behind the 29th Tank Corps, the 18th Tank Corps was to protect the army's left flank.

The first echelon corps formed their combat formations into two echelons. Thus, for example, General I.G.Lazarev, the commander of the 20th Tank Corps, placed his 8th Guards and 155th Tank Brigades in first echelon, reinforced by the 1895th and 1834th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiments and a battery from the 1505th Antitank Artillery Regiment. The 7th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade with the 291st Mortar Regiment was in the second echelon. The corps commander left the 80th Tank Brigade with the 406th Guards Mortar Battalion and a battery of the 1505th Antitank Artillery Regiment in reserve.

The first echelon was to assist the rifle formations in the penetration of the enemy defense, and the second echelon was to develop the offensive decisively into the depth. The fullest-strength tank brigades were allocated to the first echelon in order to inflict the strongest possible initial blow and to complete the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

penetration of the enemy's main defensive belt at a high tempo. At the same time, the presence of a second echelon and a reserve permitted us to influence decisively the course of battle, to intensify the offensive efforts, and to ensure a high offensive tempo. Considering the thaw and lack of roads, the planned tempo was considerable. The depth of the corps' mission was 24 kilometers on the first day of the offensive, 22 kilometers on the second day, and 32 on the third day. Thereafter, the corps was to reach Zvenigorodka and link up there with the soldiers of the 2d Ukrainian Front.

The artillery support for the commitment into combat of the 20th and 29th Tank Corps had to be conducted in accordance with a plan prepared by the 53d Army headquarters. This plan envisioned several variants: a 55-minute artillery preparation with a period for the destruction and suppression of enemy firing means and personnel and, in the event of successful actions by the forward battalions, a 10-minute fire raid.

While preparing for the operation, the army Military Council devoted great attention to the organization of co-operation and continuous command and control and to materiel and technical support.

During the organization of co-operation with combined-arms formations, the army Military Council specified penetration sectors for rifle formations, axes for the operations of tank units and subunits, and their immediate and subsequent missions. It provided for the sequence of terrain mine-clearing, determined the consecutive freeing-up of march routes for tank formations and units after the penetration of the defense, planned measures for protecting the flanks, and resolved a number of no less important questions.

Co-operation with aviation was organized in greater detail than in previous operations. To that end, several days before the beginning of the offensive, the *front* headquarters conducted joint exercises, during which the means of air support for ground forces throughout the operation were discussed. The capabilities of aviation to provide the 5th Guards Tank Army with fuel and ammunition were determined. It was necessary to resolve these problems. The spring *razputitsa* [impassability of roads] was setting in, which could severely limit the capabilities of wheeled and tracked transport in the supply of cargo to attacking forces.

During the preparatory period, all officers studied the terrain in the sector of the impending operation, the enemy defense system, and the nature of his defensive works. The army headquarters tried persistently to get all necessary information from unit and formation commanders so that all officers, and especially company and platoon commanders, would have a full understanding of the organization of the enemy's defense system, the locations of artillery positions, and the nature of engineer structures and antitank obstacles.

In spite of the limited time available for preparing the offensive and the shortages of vehicular transport, the army rear services managed to bring all types of supplies forward into the concentration regions. By the beginning of the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

operation, the army's formations had 2 combat loads of ammunition, 3 refills of fuel, and 9 days' worth of rations.

The directorate of armor supply and repair worked out a plan for repair and evacuation, while trying to do everything possible to rapidly repair disabled combat equipment. The repair subunits worked day and night.

By 21 January the army possessed 156 operational tanks and self-propelled guns. This included 49 combat vehicles in the 18th Tank Corps, 42 in the 29th Tank Corps, and 51 tanks and self-propelled guns in the 20th Tank Corps. In addition, 80 tanks and 11 self-propelled artillery pieces required repair. General S.A.Solovoi did everything possible to make them operational before the beginning of the operation…

2.

On 24 January the forward battalions of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies began their reconnaissance-in-force, and, by day's end, having captured several populated points, they had wedged from 2 to 5 kilometers deep into the enemy defenses.

In view of the forward battalions' successful operations, the 55-minute artillery preparation, which had been planned for 25 January, was replaced by a 10-minute artillery raid. The 53d Army's main forces and the 20th and 29th Tank Corps' forward brigades went over to the attack. Our forces were supported from the air by assault aviation aircraft, which suppressed enemy firing points using groups of between four and eight aircraft each. However, the enemy soon began to put up strong opposition. Each height and each populated point had to be taken by storm. The attempts by the infantry to capture Ositniazhka and Reimentorovka from the march were not crowned with success.

In light of these difficulties, at 1400 hours the 5th Guards Tank Army's main forces were committed to battle. The tank brigades lunged forward. General Lazarev, the 20th Tank Corps commander, ordered his 155th Tank Brigade, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel I.I.Proshin, to envelop Ositniazhka from the south. The brigade hurriedly carried out the enveloping maneuver, turning the right flank of the enemy units defending in the region. Fearing encirclement, the Germans abandoned Ositniazhka.

Having driven off the broken-up enemy units, by the end of the day the formations of the 20th and 29th Tank Corps had reached the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka line. The tank corps had advanced 18–20 kilometers during the five to six hours of combat.

By the time our forces reached the second defensive belt, the remnants of the 398th and 106th Infantry Divisions were deployed there. The enemy was hastily bringing the 3d and 14th Panzer Divisions forward to the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka line.

Having evaluated the situation and not expecting the approach of supporting rifle units, the corps commanders decided to penetrate the second defensive belt

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

with their own forces and develop the offensive into the depth on the morning of 26 January.

The 20th Tank Corps' formations achieved the greatest success. Its 8th Guards Tank Brigade, under the command of Colonel V.F.Orlov and supported by the 1834th and 1895th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiments, drove the enemy back from the eastern outskirts of Kapitanovka and, while pursuing them, approached Zhuravka.

At that time the 155th Tank Brigade enveloped Tishkovka from the north and, by 1200 hours, approached the eastern outskirts of Zhuravka. By 1500 hours Zhuravka had been fully liberated by the combined forces of both brigades, and, by 2300 hours, they had driven the Hitlerites from the large populated point of Lebedin.

Attacking on the army's left flank, the 29th Tank Corps also penetrated the second defensive belt, advanced 5–6 kilometers in heavy fighting, and seized the populated point of Turiia. Heavy enemy counterattacks from Zlatopol', however, forced the corps to go over to the defense.

On the morning of 26 January, the 5th Guards Tank Army command realized that the enemy had assembled large forces.

Striving to liquidate the penetration, on the morning of 27 January the enemy delivered heavy counterattacks, trying to cut off the penetrating tank corps and restore the situation. Units of the 57th and 389th Infantry Divisions and SS 'Viking' Panzer Division attacked from the north, and three panzer divisions (the 3d, 11th, and 14th) attacked from the south. The enemy succeeded in seizing Tishkovka and the eastern outskirts of Kapitanovka, interrupted the 5th Guards Tank Army's communications, and disrupted that army's communications with the 20th and 29th Tank Corps. The headquarters of the 20th Tank Corps also turned out to be cut off from its own forces.

Despite the complexity of the situation, the army commander ordered the 20th Tank Corps commander, General Lazarev, to develop the offensive decisively toward Shpola and Zvenigorodka, where it was to link up with formations of the 6th Tank Army. Simultaneously, the 29th Tank Corps was to fulfill its orders to destroy the opposing enemy and, after reaching the Volodnoe and Lipianka line, to occupy defenses on a front facing to the southwest, at the same time protecting the 20th Corps' left flank.

The 20th Tank Corps commander decided to seize Shpola with the forces of his 8th Guards and 155th Tank Brigades. He anticipated using the remaining forces, in co-operation with the 26th Rifle Corps' units, to defend Kapitanovka and the grove southwest of Tishkovka.

Having sent out reconnaissance and determined that the Germans had prepared Shpola for all-round defense and that its garrison counted up to a regiment of infantry and a training battalion, the commanders of the 8th Guards and 155th Tank Brigades decided to capture the town by means of a sudden night attack. Having left one motorized rifle battalion to hold on to Lebedin, the brigade secretly concentrated on the approaches to the southern and southeastern

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

outskirts of Shpola. The Germans did not expect a night attack. When the tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces opened intense fire on the edge of the town, the railroad station, and firing points, and then penetrated into the streets of the town, the enemy was not able to offer organized opposition and began to withdraw in disorder to the city center, where he was finished off. By 1000 hours on 27 January, Shpola had been completely cleared of enemy.

During 27 January the remaining corps forces were brought forward to Shpola. The 7th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, under the command of Colonel P.V.Petukhov, was moved up to repel possible counterattacks to the north of the town by forces of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping. This brigade, reinforced by the 1505th Antitank Artillery Regiment and the 291st Mortar Regiment, protected the right flank of the corps' main forces. The brigades of the 29th Tank Corps, which by that time had reached the Vodianoe and Lipianka line, protected the 20th Corps' left flank.

To achieve the aim of rapidly reaching Zvenigorodka, the army commander undertook measures to repel the enemy counterattacks and to re-establish requisite communications. He introduced his second echelon, the 18th Tank Corps, into combat. The *tankists* of General V.I.Polozkov, together with General A.G.Selivanov's 5th Guards Cavalry Corps, which was committed into battle from the *front* reserve, succeeded in repulsing the enemy counterattacks and restoring the communications. However, the corridor was narrow, only 4–6 kilometers, and it was exposed through and through to enemy artillery and mortar fire.

The enemy held firmly to the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka line and committed fresh forces to combat to widen the corridor. The formations of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies approached to assist the 18th Tank Corps. They did not, however, succeed in overcoming the enemy. Fierce combat continued to rage in that region for several more days.

After the liberation of Shpola, only 33–35 kilometers remained to Zvenigorodka. One could not presuppose how significant an enemy force would be encountered along that axis because by that time the German-fascist command had concentrated its main forces along the flanks of the penetration sector.

Favorable conditions had been created for the formations to link up with the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front and complete the encirclement of the enemy.

These conditions were exploited. On the morning of 28 January, the 20th Tank Corps' brigades went over to the attack in the direction of Zvenigorodka. While destroying the broken-up enemy units in their paths, in the middle of the day the forward tank subunits penetrated into the town from the east and southeast. At that moment, the mobile detachment of the 6th Tank Army, the 233d Tank Brigade, punched into the town from the west. The courageous *tankists* of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Front united in Zvenigorodka.

Thus, from 24 through 28 January, the forces of the 5th Guards Tank Army, together with the combined-arms formations of the 53d Army, had penetrated the enemy defense, exploited the success up to 75 kilometers into the depth, and linked

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

up with the 1st Ukrainian Front's forces at Zvenigorodka. A large enemy grouping found itself in encirclement.

However, the created encirclement front had great gaps in it and sectors that were covered by insignificant forces. Thus, the interval between the brigades of the 20th Tank Corps, which were located in Zvenigorodka, and the 7th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, which was defending at Shpola, amounted to 30–35 kilometers. None of our units was located here. An interval of 10–12 kilometers also existed between the 7th Brigade and the right-flank units of the 29th Tank Corps. The rifle formations of the 53d Army and the second echelon of the 5th Guards Tank Army, the 18th Tank Corps, were all still fighting along the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka line.

A complex operational situation had arisen. The tank formations of the 5th Guard and 6th Tank Armies, which had reached the Zvenigorodka region, were far out of touch with the *front* main forces and were themselves encircled. While continuing to press against the flanks of the corridor in the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka region, the enemy continued to create a real threat of severing this narrow corridor, which connected the forces attacking from the front with the tank formations which had penetrated deep into the enemy's defense.

Consequently, the *front* command took measures first and foremost to widen the corridor through which the 20th and 29th Tank Corps had punched and to create solid internal and external [encirclement] fronts. The forces of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies, together with the 18th Tank and the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps' forces, conducted a sustained battle to penetrate the enemy defense along the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka line.

One must note that the enemy forces which found themselves encircled adhered to tactical actions different from those they had previously employed. If at Stalingrad the enemy had sought to prevent closure of the encirclement ring by a stubborn defense and expected assistance from without, now the enemy grouping, while not counting on help, first of all itself undertook decisive attempts to escape from the cauldron by concentrating large forces on separate axes. At this time repeated attempts were made by large tank forces to de-blockade the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii grouping.

Especially fierce combat raged on 28 January. The fascists hurled up to 20 tanks and infantry on armored transporters into a counterattack against Captain V.A.Ianushkevich's 3d Battalion, 181st Tank Brigade. Ianushkevich placed his tank battalion in ambush positions and allowed the tanks to approach as close as possible. When they had approached to a distance of 200–250 meters, on his command the companies opened a hurricane of fire from their guns. The battalion commander personally destroyed five tanks. Inspired by the actions of the *tankists,* our infantry decisively advanced to new positions.

Captain Valentin Antonovich Ianushkevich was awarded the Order of the Red Banner for his bravery. Immediately after the battle, a party commission accepted him as a member of the Communist Party.[3]

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

During this battle, while following in the ranks of the infantry, the 181st Tank Brigade's antitank battery, commanded by Sergeant V.N.Ivansev, destroyed an enemy gun and machine-gun by direct fire. The personnel of other gun crews followed Ivansev's example. When the enemy retreated after the next counterattack, Ivansev turned his attention to the fact that a 'Panther' remained on the battlefield. The hatch of the tank was closed. This seemed strange to the sergeant. Then, while under heavy fire, he made his way to the tank—the crew was still in place. The mechanic—driver stared at Ivansev through the observation slit. The sergeant began to wave his cap in the direction of his side's forces. The 'Panther' cautiously set out and moved behind Ivansev. Soon the tank, which was in good operating order, arrived in the brigade's dispositions. As became clear later, its crew had decided to surrender even before the battle.[4]

A medic of the 110th Tank Brigade's 1st Tank Battalion, M.A.Bachinsky, evacuated 35 wounded soldiers and commanders with their personal weapons from the battlefield under heavy artillery and mortar fire. On the forward edge, he found and provided medical help to the brigade's assistant chief of staff, Captain N.M.Levin, and the assistant chief of the brigade political section, Senior Lieutenant Z.Z.Zakiev, and, after being bandaged, they continued to fight…

In order to overcome the resistance of enemy forces threatening the corridor, General Rotmistrov decided to attack them from the rear. To that end, he sent his reserve, the 25th Tank Brigade, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel D.E.Kleiko, from behind the army's right flank to envelop the counterattacking enemy grouping.

The brigade began a precipitous attack from the Ekaterinovka region in the direction of Sam Gorodok and Lebedin. Behind it, by order of the *front* commander, rushed units of the 4th Guards Army. Exploiting the success, they occupied Smela, widened the penetration considerably, and began to fortify the internal encirclement front.

As soon as the 25th Tank Brigade had entered Lebedin, the Germans, fearful that the units defending the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka line would be encircled, began to withdraw toward the southwest.

Thus, by the second half of the day on 29 January, the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces realized the possibility of continuing the offensive along the previous axis.

The enemy, however, tried to do everything possible to save his encircled forces. The transfer of large tank forces from the Kirovograd and Vinnitsa regions continued. These [forces] had a considerable number of 'Tigers', 'Panthers', and 'Ferdinands'. The correlation in forces, particularly tanks, turned out to be in favor of the enemy.

The command of the encircled grouping was ordered to create a continuous defensive front and to be prepared to deliver a blow to tear through the encirclement front and destroy the penetrating Soviet forces.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

In its turn, the Soviet command implemented measures for strengthening the internal and external encirclement fronts and for compressing the size of the cauldron.

As before, the 5th Guards Tank Army's formations played an active role in the operations. After capturing Zvenigorodka, the 20th Tank Corps dispatched a strong forward detachment northward to the Ol'shana region and, together with the 1st Separate Guards Motorcycle Regiment and units of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps, smashed the enemy rear area and created conditions suitable for the piecemeal destruction of his encircled grouping.

Rifle divisions operationally subordinated to the 5th Guards Tank Army commander advanced to the west from Shpola to Iurkovka and further, to Zvenigorodka. They occupied a defense along the external encirclement front.

Thus, by the end of 31 January, the 84th Rifle Division reached the Shpola region and occupied a defense along the Iskrennoe and Vasil'kovo line (2 kilometers southwest of Shpola). Having just reached the army, the 94th Guards Rifle Division occupied a defense to the west along the Iurkovka and Stepovka line. The 6th Guards Airborne Division, which was concentrating in Shpola, was then to occupy a defense to the right. On 1 February the headquarters of the 49th Rifle Corps arrived to join the army and control these rifle formations.

While the combined-arms formations fortified the internal encirclement front, the 5th Guards Tank Army's units were shifted to the external front. Soon the army was entrusted with the mission of occupying and holding firmly to the Zvenigorodka, Iurkovka, Iskrennoe, Skotorevo, Vodianoe, and Lipianka line, a total distance of around 60 kilometers.

The 3d, 11th, and 14th Panzer Divisions and other enemy formations were operating in this defensive sector. They attacked now in the Shpola region and then in the Zvenigorodka region, while trying to find a weak spot. Fierce battles raged.

In order to create a reliable defense, in addition to the 49th Rifle Corps, the 5th Engineer-Sapper Brigade of the *RVK* [the Reserve of the High Command] was attached to the 5th Guards Tank Army commander. The forces' operations were supported by a portion of the 1st Assault Aviation Corps' aircraft.

The 6th Tank Army shifted over to the defense to the right of the 5th Guards Tank Army. Units of the 53d Army were defending to the left.

Other measures were undertaken. To provide more effective operational control, the army headquarters relocated to Shpola. The command conducted intensive work for the support of continuous and stable co-operation with neighboring armies, artillery, and aviation. General G.I.Gastilovich, a representative of Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K.Zhukov, arrived in Shpola to co-ordinate the operations with the 6th Tank Army at the junction of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts.

The defense was constructed in such a manner that at any moment it could deliver powerful counterattacks and counterstrokes. Two corps were deployed in the first echelon. The 20th Tank Corps defended on the army's right flank, on the

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

western and southwestern outskirts of Zvenigorodka, and further to the southeast to Iurkovka. The 49th Rifle Corps was situated in the center of the operational formation with part of the 29th Tank Corps. It occupied a defense facing south along the Iurkovka, Iskrennoe, Vodianoe, and Lipianka line.

The 29th Tank Corps' main forces were concentrated in the Kniazh'ia region in second echelon prepared to conduct counterattacks. The second-echelon 18th Tank Corps was concentrated south of Shpola in readiness to counterattack to the south and southeast.

The army headquarters devoted special attention to the organization of an antitank defense. For that purpose, water obstacles, forested masses, and solid buildings were exploited to a maximum. All approaches to the forward edge and dangerous tank axes were mined to the depth of the defense. Regiments of antitank artillery were moved up to the forward edge to increase the stability of the defense.

Tanks with inoperable drive systems were used as stationary firing points. During quiet periods they were repaired in the immediate vicinity of the front lines.

Battalion and company commanders prepared reserve positions for the tanks along some axes and also ambush positions. Antitank artillery was employed primarily along dangerous tank axes.

Units of the 49th Rifle Corps were supported by a reliable screen of tanks in the defense, which permitted the tank corps commanders to allocate considerable forces and equipment to the second echelon and freely maneuver their reserves.

The 5th Guards Tank Army organized its defense in conditions of unceasing enemy attacks. The distance between the internal and external encirclement fronts in a number of places did not exceed 15–20 kilometers, and the enemy shot through and through our forces' combat formation with artillery fire. Furthermore, small groups of enemy tanks and submachine-gunners often oozed through the intervals and gaps, disrupting communications and disorganizing the repair and evacuation of combat equipment and weaponry.

Failing to achieve success along the Kapitanovka and Tishkovka axis, the enemy regrouped part of his forces in the region southwest of Shpola, and, during the second half of the day on 1 February, he attacked in the direction of Shpola and Matusov, trying to penetrate to the encircled force. As a result of the fierce combat, the Germans succeeded somewhat in pressing our army back. He occupied Skotorevo and penetrated to Iskrennoe.

To repel the attack, the army commander dispatched the 29th Tank Corps, which by that time was located in the Kniazh'ia region. Combat lasted two days. By 3 February the formations of the 29th and 18th Tank Corps, in co-operation with the 49th Rifle Corps' forces and supported by the 5th Air Army, halted the enemy and restored the position. Thus, this attempt to provide assistance to the encircled grouping also collapsed.

By the end of January, the encircled forces ceased to receive fuel, ammunition, and provisions. Existing reserves were essentially used up.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

However, what they did have was sufficient for several days. Because of their fuel shortages, the capability of tank units to carry out a maneuver was reduced, and the Germans were forced to economize on the use of ammunition. The Hitlerite command attempted to bring in supplies to the encircled forces by air and enlisted the services of many transport aircraft to do so. This, however, did not improve the situation. The fighter aviation of the 5th Air Army and antiaircraft artillery solidly blockaded the grouping from the air.

The soldiers of the 6th Antiaircraft Artillery Division waged a constant struggle with enemy aviation. During the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii battle, the division shot down 43 transport aircraft which were attempting to bring in supplies to the encircled grouping. Of this total, the 366th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel P.K.Kuznetsov, shot down 31 aircraft.

The batteries not only conducted a struggle with enemy aviation; in this difficult situation, they also actively fought against tanks. For example, on 30 January, when 20 'Tigers' penetrated southwest of Zhuravka, CaptainS. I.Kulik's battery of the 1062d Antiaircraft Regiment bravely took part in battle. The antiaircraft artillerymen destroyed three 'Tigers' by direct fire. The antiaircraft batteries of the 366th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment, commanded by Captains I.L.Savchenko and I.A.Grishin, distinguished themselves in the Shpola region on 1 February. While operating in close co-operation with field artillery, the antiaircraft artillerymen repulsed several strong enemy tank and infantry attacks.

Thus, by the end of 3 February, an internal encirclement front had been formed, and a dense defense had been created along the external front.

The Soviet population in the liberated villages and towns warmly welcomed our forces. The local inhabitants assisted our forces in overcoming water obstacles, pointed out the most favorable movement and march routes, and reported everything they knew about the enemy. Voluntary self-defense detachments were formed in many villages. After the tank brigades had left, these detachments destroyed small subunits of Hitlerites and defended the population.

After the 20th Tank Corps' 7th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade had liberated the village of Novoselitsa, an inhabitant of the village, Nina Filippovna Tsviashchenko, entrusted Guards Lieutenant A.A.Usakov with the combat Red Banner of the 133d Separate Rifle Battalion. The story of the banner is as follows. When our units were withdrawing in 1941, that banner had been given to her for safe-keeping by a severely wounded lieutenant. She protected the patriot's relic throughout the years of fascist occupation. Nina Tsviashchenko's family maintained constant contact with the partisans and her invalid father, Filipp Tsviashchenko, provided assistance to the partisans in the collection of provisions and weapons.[5]

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

In the early days of February, the Soviet command proceeded to fulfill the second part of its plan—the liquidation of the encircled enemy formations.

The encirclement ring was rapidly being tightened. By attacks from different directions, the forces operating along the internal front attempted to dismember the encircled grouping, chop them up, and destroy the separate garrisons and strong points.

At this time powerful enemy attacks by forces, which grew as enemy reserves approached, had to be repulsed along the external front. On 4 February a strong enemy tank grouping numbering around 130 tanks from the 3d, 11th, and 13th Panzer Divisions supported by bomber aircraft delivered an attack from the Vodianoe region toward Lebedin.

The paths of the enemy advance were blocked by the formations of the 29th and 18th Tank Corps. However, after sustained combat the Hitlerites occupied Vodianoe and Lipianka and continued to advance to the north. Only around 30 kilometers remained to reach the encircled forces whose units occupied Viazovok and Tsvetkovo.

The battle continued deep into the night. Failing to achieve their goal, the fascists ceased their attacks and began to regroup their forces.

Early the following morning, the enemy panzer divisions once again launched a heavy attack, but this time along the Vodianoe and Shpola axis. The Hitlerites succeeded in wedging into our defense and reaching the Lebedin and Zhuravka line. After unsuccessful attempts to pierce the defense along the Shpola axis, the main forces attempted to envelop Shpola from the east and punch northward through Lebedin to Tsvetkovo. Units of the 389th and 57th Infantry Divisions, the SS 'Viking' Division, and other enemy formations launched attacks to meet them.

During the night, the *front* commander transferred tank and rifle units of the 5th and 7th Guards Armies to assist the 5th Guards Tank Army.

Fierce combat raged two days and two nights. By means of a firm defense and decisive counterattacks, the 29th and 18th Tank Corps, together with formations from the 49th Rifle Corps and reserves transferred from the 2d Ukrainian Front's left wing, wore out the enemy and, by 7 February, finally halted him.

Simultaneously, the formations of the 4th Guards Army, which were operating along the internal front, crushed the enemy in strong points created in the populated points of Burtki, Viazovok, and Tsvetkovo and drove the encircled units further to the north.

Convinced of the durability of the 5th Guard Tank Army's defense and the fruitlessness of his counterattacks in the direction of Shpola, the German-fascist command began to regroup his forces further to the west, in the region south of Lysianka.

Meanwhile, the iron ring tightened inexorably. Abandoning one position after another, the Hitlerites suffered heavy losses in personnel and equipment and lost

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

the ability to maneuver along internal communications routes. Now the entire territory occupied by the encircled forces could be fired upon by our artillery.

To avoid senseless bloodletting, the Soviet command suggested that the enemy divisions throw down their arms.

However, the command of the grouping, trusting in Hitler's promises to rescue the forces in the 'cauldron', rejected the ultimatum. It received an order to prepare an attack toward Lysianka from the Steblev region. This was to be the final attempt to free the encircled forces. This reckoning was based on a combined meeting operation by the forces of the encircled grouping and reserves which were assembled on the external front.

At the cost of desperate measures, the enemy was able to preserve for himself a salient in the Steblev region which pointed sharply southward toward Lysianka. The Hitlerites pulled together all of their most combat-effective forces in order to launch an attack on Lysianka through Shenderovka. Here they concentrated the units of two infantry divisions, a battalion of the SS 'Viking' Division, the SS 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade, and other subunits.

The German-fascist command succeeded in concentrating large forces in the Rizino and Erki region along the external front opposite the boundary line between the 5th Guards Tank and the 6th Tank Armies. The 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions, the SS 'Adolph Hitler' Panzer Division, a battalion of heavy tanks, two battalions of assault guns, and other units were now moved up into the Rizino region, where, since 4 February, the 6th Tank Army had already repelled repeated tank and infantry assaults. The 11th, 13th, and 14th Panzer Divisions and part of the 3d Panzer Division were brought forward to the Erki region.

While preparing to repel the new enemy attack, the 5th Guards Tank Army commander regrouped his forces, and, in particular, he moved the 18th Tank Corps into the Mikhailovka region, east of Zvenigorodka. At this time the army had 160 operational tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces.[6]

On 11 February the German-fascist forces along the external front once again shifted over to the attack. Tank attacks supported by bomber aircraft and artillery commenced along an axis northward from the Erki region. The Hitlerites made every effort to punch through to the encircled forces. They succeeded in capturing Erki. However, in a two-day battle, the 29th and 18th Tank Corps, together with the formations of the 49th Rifle Corps, pulverized the enemy's personnel and equipment and halted him.

A tense situation was also developing in the 6th Tank Army's sector west of Zvenigorodka. Here the Hitlerites, who were attacking from the Rizino region toward Lysianka, succeeded in penetrating the front and advancing significantly toward the encircled forces. On 12 February the encircled forces launched an attack of their own from the Steblev region to meet them. Sustained fighting, which often degenerated into hand-to-hand combat, ensued. The Hitlerites who were attacking from the north succeeded in advancing to the Khil'ki and Komarovka line.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

By day's end on 14 February, German tanks operating from the south had occupied Lysianka. However, they were able to advance no further. Exhausted and bloodied, nothing remained for the enemy except to shift over to the defense.

However, the situation remained threatening. The distance between the forces attacking from the Steblev region and the tank units which had penetrated into Lysianka decreased to 10–12 kilometers.

In order to prevent any further enemy advance and to destroy the encircled grouping quickly, our command undertook a series of energetic measures. Rifle formations, artillery, and engineer units were immediately shifted to the threatened axis. The *Stavka* entrusted the 2d Ukrainian Front command with the direction of those large formations which had been tasked with destroying the forces in the 'cauldron'. The 1st Ukrainian Front's 27th Army was resubordinated to the 2d Ukrainian Front.

Consequently, the 5th Guards Tank Army received a new mission: to move its main forces to the northwest into the Zhurzhintsy and Komarovka region and to prevent the formations of the enemy's tank grouping, which were attacking from the Rizino region, from linking up with the encircled units.[7] The 49th Rifle Corps was removed from subordination to the 5th Guards Tank Army and, together with its defensive sector, it was transferred to the 53d Army's control.[8]

It was risky to remove the tank corps from their occupied positions since the enemy launched attacks in the region southeast of Zvenigorodka all day on 13 February and into the following night. However, the army Military Council estimated that the German-fascist command would hardly continue the attacks along that axis if the greatest success took shape in the Lysianka region.

This estimate was correct. On 14 February the Germans significantly weakened their attacks in the Zvenigorodka region. Therefore, during the night of 14 February, the 18th and 20th Tank Corps were relieved by forces of the 49th Rifle Corps and only tanks which were unable to move were left behind.

The 18th Tank Corps reached the Zhurzhintsy region with its 30 operable tanks, and, on 14 February, it occupied defenses facing to the south and southwest. Employing its 8th Guards and 155th Tank Brigades, the 20th Tank Corps fought heavy defensive battles on the northern and northwestern outskirts of Lysianka. The corps' 7th Motorized Rifle Brigade continued to occupy defenses in the Zvenigorodka region, and its 80th Tank Brigade operated with the 4th Guards Army's formations in the liberation of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii. The 29th Tank Corps reached the Komarovka region. The army commander resubordinated this corps' 11th and 27th Tank Brigades, which were reinforcing the army, to the control of the *front* commander. The corps received the mission of attacking Steblev and throwing the encircled enemy forces back behind the Ross' River.

In order to be closer to its forces, the army headquarters repositioned itself from the northern outskirts of Kniazh'ia to Morintsy.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The units were experiencing greater difficulties in obtaining fuel since the roads had become more difficult to traverse—fuel expenditures sharply increased, and transport began to lag behind. There were days when only 0.3 refills of fuel remained in the corps.

The matter of ammunition, provisions, and benzene was not much better. The impassable mud forced the use of tracked transport. Columns of tractors with trailers were formed and there were tens of harnessed oxen and horses in each corps, and in many sectors the cargo was dragged by hand for many kilometers. The inhabitants of liberated villages provided the forces with assistance in repairing roads and bridges and in the transport of materiel supplies.

The situation in the encircled forces was becoming catastrophic. The ring around them tightened inexorably, and on 14 February the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces liberated the town of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, a powerful center of enemy resistance.

The enemy had suffered enormous losses. Mountains of bodies and heaps of destroyed combat equipment covered the field of battle. The enemy had suffered especially heavy losses in the regions of the populated points of Viazovok, Burty, Ol'shana, and north of Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii. Our tanks smashed and burned many vehicles and tanks which were stubbornly attempting to cross into the Komarovka region along the Shenderovka and Komarovka road.

By 15 February enemy resistance was at its most ferocious. The Hitlerite tank units, which were advancing from Lysianka, fought only 6–8 kilometers from the forces who were straining to escape from encirclement. The enemy command was announcing that the corridor had allegedly been broken through, and that, during the night of 17 February, all units were leaving the 'cauldron' and were linking up in the Lysianka region.[9]

At 0800 hours on 15 February, the forces of the 5th Guards Tank Army attacked in the direction of Komarovka, Shenderovka, and Steblev, while part of its forces repelled enemy attacks on Lysianka.

The 29th Tank Corps with 15 operable tanks and the forces of its 25th and 32d Tank Brigades occupied the central part of Komarovka, but here they were halted because there was no bridge across a swampy stream. Defending along the southwest outskirts of Zhurzhintsy, the 18th Tank Corps repulsed enemy attacks. With difficulty, the 20th Tank Corps' 155th and 8th Guards Tank Brigades held the enemy back from the northern outskirts of Lysianka. Strengthening their efforts, the Hitlerites launched one attack after another. Both sides suffered heavy losses. By day's end only six tanks remained in the corps. The commander dispatched the 181st Tank Brigade to assist them.

Late in the evening on 15 February, a telegram was received by the army headquarters which reported about awards which had been presented to a number of formations. By virtue of a 13 February order of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Orders of the Red Banner were awarded to the 31st, 32d, 110th, 8th Guards, 155th, and 80th Tank Brigades for distinguished combat operations and service to the Homeland in the struggle against the invaders.[10]

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The Military Council warmly congratulated the soldiers and commanders of these formations on the high governmental awards and encouraged them to multiply their combat glory in forthcoming battles.

By midnight on 17 February, a strong snowstorm had begun; a blizzard soon developed, and the roads drifted over with snow. The Hitlerites decided to punch their way through our forces' combat formation, even if only in small groups.

Concentrating all of their combat-capable units and formations in the Shenderovka region, the Hitlerites attempted to penetrate in two columns. The left column was made up of subunits of the SS 'Viking' Division, the 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade, and the 72d and 112th Infantry Divisions. This column included generals and senior officers riding in armored transporters and protected by tanks. The remnants of the 57th, 82d, and the 167th Infantry Divisions were in the right column. By order of the command, it [the right column] had to absorb the attacks of our forces and facilitate the penetration of the left column. The penetration was planned on a frontage of 4.5 kilometers.

Our reconnaissance discovered the concentration of enemy forces, and soon a heavy artillery strike was inflicted on the enemy. Despite the drifts and the dense snowfall, Po-2 aircraft from the 5th Air Army rose into the skies.

While the Germans were arranging their units which were being subjected to bombing and artillery fire, dawn broke. An army reconnaissance group, which was led by the intelligence officer of the 1st Separate Motorcycle Regiment, Guards Lieutenant S.I.Polezhaisky, detected the movement of an enemy column from the Khil'ki and Komarovka line toward Lysianka. The tanks of the reconnaissance group opened fire. The column's advance halted. The reconnaissance scouts destroyed up to 100 soldiers and officers and 20 vehicles and captured 17 Hitlerites who belonged to subunits of the 72d and 112th Infantry Divisions.[11]

Nevertheless, the enemy columns approached to the forward edge of our forces and deployed. The soldiers of the 27th and 4th Guards Armies absorbed the concentrated attacks of tanks and infantry. A fierce battle ensued. The soldiers fought to the death. It was often difficult to understand the situation in the blizzard and the dense snowfall.

At that time, the 29th Tank Corps was attacking Shenderovka in the penetrating grouping's rear area. At 1000 hours it captured the southern part of Shenderovka and began to develop the attack toward Khil'ki and the ever-shrinking circle which contained the penetrating units. The tanks cut their way into the enemy columns.

At 1700 hours on 17 February, the corps commanders, Generals Polozkov, Kirichenko, and Lazarev, were informed by the army commander that many soldiers and officers from the encircled enemy grouping had been taken prisoner. Simultaneously, the forces were given the mission to finish off the remains of the chopped-up enemy group.

By the end of 17 February, the enemy grouping in the Komarovka, Zhurzhintsy, and Pochapintsy region had been smashed by the decisive attacks

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

of the 29th and 18th Tank Corps, the rifle formations of the 27th Army, and the units of the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps. Only a small group of enemy tanks and the armored transporters carrying the generals and senior officers succeeded in penetrating in the direction of Lysianka.

Later, a prisoner from the 'Viking' Division said the following about the final hours of the encircled grouping:

> Our division, which numbered around 7,000 soldiers and officers, suffered the loss of around 4,000 men in two weeks. During the entire period we had to withdraw under a hurricane of Russian fire. The roads were jammed with discarded vehicles and weapons. We were desperate. On the night of 17 February, we were served with a strengthened dose of vodka and permitted to eat the untouched reserves of food. At 0200 hours an order was announced that we could no longer count on help from the outside. At first light, a final desperate attempt was made to break out from encirclement. The SS 'Viking' Division went in front, followed by the 'Wallonia' Panzer Grenadier Brigade. The headquarters and remnants of the 72d and 112th Infantry Divisions brought up the rear. In all, the column numbered around 8,000 soldiers and officers. We were ordered to throw away guns, vehicles, and all military equipment and even personal effects. We had traversed hardly 300 meters when Russian tanks fell upon us. Cossacks appeared behind the tanks. We managed to conceal ourselves around the smashed vehicles. We surrendered the following morning.

On 18 February the 5th Guards Tank Army's formations completed the destruction and capture of the last broken-up enemy groups, which had sought refuge in the forests and the gullies. During this day of combat, more than 1,800 soldiers and officers were killed while attempting to resist and 2,000 were captured.[12] On this day in Moscow, in the name of the homeland, 20 artillery volleys from 224 guns proclaimed our forces' new glorious victory.

By virtue of a 20 February order of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the 25th and 181st Tank Brigades, the 1438th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiment, and the 994th Night Bomber Regiment were awarded the Order of the Red Banner for their exemplary fulfillment of the commands' combat missions in the battles around Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii.

The honorific title of Korsun' was awarded to the 7th Guards and 32d Motorized Rifle Brigades, the 6th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment, and the 4th Separate Communications Regiment.

By virtue of a 21 February 1944 order of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the army commander, Guards Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces P.A.Rotmistrov, was awarded the military rank of Marshal of Armored Forces.

In the following days the 5th Guards Tank Army's 18th Tank Corps was situated in the Zhurzhintsy region, the 29th Tank Corps in Komarovka, and the 20th Tank Corps north of Lysianka. The personnel repaired their equipment,

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

filled up their vehicles with fuel and ammunition, and used every hour to prepare for new encounters with the enemy.

During the battles at Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, the 5th Guards Tank Army made a worthy contribution to the destruction of the large grouping of German-fascist forces.

The army's successful actions during the beginning of the operation were predetermined by their rapid penetration of the enemy defense together with the combined-arms formations of the 53d Army, by the precipitous advance of the 20th and 29th Tank Corps to link up with the 6th Tank Army's forces, and, during subsequent combat, by the timely maneuver of its forces and weaponry along decisive axes.

The experience of the battles at Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii demonstrated that, after the encirclement of a large enemy grouping, a tank army could be assigned the mission of creating a durable defense along an external front. The results of the operation confirmed the capability of a large tank formation to perform such missions. The 5th Guards Tank Army, reinforced by antitank artillery, engineer forces, and rifle formations, could create a stable defense within a short period. It prevented the enemy's panzer divisions from penetrating to the encircled grouping in spite of the fact that the external encirclement front stood only 10–12 kilometers from the internal front. It was characteristic of the defensive formation that the tanks were situated in compact groups capable of striking a fierce blow along the required axis at any moment.

During the operation army forces destroyed 249 tanks, 311 guns of various calibers, 109 mortars, 1,474 vehicles, 22 aircraft, and 16,870 soldiers and officers. In addition, 24 tanks, 35 self-propelled guns, 178 guns of varying calibers, 1,533 vehicles, and 27 warehouses with ammunition, provisions, and other goods were captured, and 2,335 soldiers and officers were taken prisoner.[13]

The complete destruction of ten divisions and one brigade severely weakened the position of the German-fascist forces along the southwestern axis. The enemy was finally thrown back from the region of the middle reaches of the Dnepr River. The liquidation of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient eliminated the threat to the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts' wings and, in addition, provided freedom of maneuver for our forces along the front. The Fastov, Belaia Tserkov', Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii, Znamenka, and Dnepropetrovsk railroad was cleared along its entire length.

The shortening of the front lines permitted the freeing-up of a sizable number of Soviet forces. All of this created favorable conditions for the development of a subsequent offensive to the Southern Bug and Dnestr Rivers. The 5th Guards Tank Army now began to prepare for that offensive.

Source: P.Ia.Egorov, I.V.Krivoborsky, I.K.Ivlev, and A.I.Rogalevich, *Dorogami pobed: boevoi put' 5-i gvardeiskoi tankovoi armii* (By the Roads of Victories: The Combat Journey of the 5th Guards Tank Army) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969), 161–89.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

NOTES

1. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 240, Op. 15789, D. 16, LL. 210–14.
2. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 240, Op. 10695, D. 12, L. 116.
3. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4982, D. 59, L. 33.
4. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4948, D. 59, L. 33.
5. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4982, D. 39, L. 15.
6. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4948, D. 154, L. 18.
7. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4956, D. 14, LL. 559–62.
8. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 240, Op. 15789, D. 16, LL. 389–90.
9. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4950, D. 12, L. 76.
10. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4948, D. 154, LL. 25–26.
11. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 240, Op. 36392, D. 2, L. 100.
12. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4950, D. 12, L. 100.
13. *Arkhiv MO SSSR,* F. 332, Op. 4948, D. 154, LL. 32–33.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 4:
The Engineer Forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

The Korsun'-Shevchekovskii operation belongs among the most distinguished events of the Great Patriotic War. This operation represented an important step in our victorious advance to the west and played a great role in the development of Soviet military art.[1]

I would like to inform readers about engineer support of the operation, which assisted in its successful conduct, based upon the experiences of the 2d Ukrainian Front.

As is well known, the enemy held on to a salient which jutted deeply into our force dispositions in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii region. His grouping in this region (10 divisions, 1 panzer grenadier brigade, 1 panzer battalion, and 6 assault guns battalions of the German First Panzer and Eighth Armies) tied up the operations of our forces and interfered with their advance to the Southern Bug River.[2] The prepared nature of the Hitlerites' engineer defenses in the various sectors of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii salient was not uniform. They prepared their most stable defense, which was anchored on a well-developed system of emplacements and obstacles, along the Kagarlyk and Moshny line at the apex of the salient. In the Moshny and Smela sector of the forward edge, the defense proceeded along heavily swampy terrain which hindered any offensive by large numbers of our forces. To the south from Smela, their defense was stronger still and consisted of two belts.

The forward edge of the main belt extended along the banks of the Sukhoi Tashlyk and Tiasmin Rivers. It had a depth of 3–6 kilometers and consisted of strong points and centers of resistance which were protected by minefields and barbed wire along both the front and the flanks.

During the preparatory period for the operation, the principal missions related to engineer support were engineer reconnaissance, the preparation of jumping-off positions for the attack, the conduct of engineer-*maskirovka* [deception] measures to ensure secrecy while regrouping forces and during their arrival in jumping-off positions, the preparation of passages through their own and the enemy's obstacles, and the establishment of command and observation posts.

The most difficult mission was work on the construction of roads into the jumping-off positions.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

During the operation the 2d Ukrainian Front directed its main efforts at the reconnoitering and removal of obstacles, the restoration and preparation of roads for use by the attacking forces, the ensuring of consolidation of captured lines, and the repelling of enemy counterattacks.

Each army on the main attack axes (the adjoining flanks of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies) had an army engineer battalion and, in addition, the 4th Guards Army received two and the 52d Army received three engineer battalions from the *front's* resources. The 5th and 27th Engineer Brigades from the *front* reserve operated along this axis.

The short period available for preparing the operation placed a certain imprint on the organization of reconnaissance of the enemy defenses opposite the forces of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies. It was conducted mainly from divisional and corps engineer observation posts by experienced scout-sappers and by officers from the army engineer battalions. One such post was located every 2–3 kilometers of front. Careful observation determined the most favorable approaches to the enemy's defense, and the forward battalions, whose actions signaled the beginning of the offensive operation, exploited these approaches.[3]

To regroup the 5th Guards Tank Army's formations and one rifle division and two artillery brigades from the *front* left wing to the right required the construction of a 35-kilometer lateral road over four days. The *front* commander, Army General I.S.Konev, entrusted this mission to the engineer forces. The limited time period for the construction of the lateral road required that a more than 20-meter-wide belt for the road be cleared of mines. Movement within this belt was forbidden. Access from the lateral road was permitted only in designated sectors. A number of roads leading from the lateral road were closed to traffic. This was due to the fact that, during their withdrawal, the enemy had mined all lateral roads. It was not deemed possible to clear them of mines during the offensive since the engineer forces subordinate to the *fronts* had managed to free only *front* roads [routes] and the streets in Kirovograd of dangerous explosive materials.

In order to build column routes rapidly, the sappers [combat engineers] bypassed densely mined sectors. In just one of the bypassed sectors (from Khainovka to Sentovo), around 20,000 mines were removed during the subsequent continuous mine-clearing.[4]

The clearing of mines from roads for lateral movement was conducted by one engineer battalion (of three engineer companies) and a mine-sweeper engineer battalion, which had 160 mine-sweeping dogs. Over four days, the mine-sweeper battalion cleared a 60-kilometer route of mines, and the engineer battalion cleared 75 kilometers. On average, each mine-sweeper company cleared 7.5 kilometers of road per day, and each engineer company 6 kilometers per day.

Simultaneously with the mine-clearing of lateral roads, it became clear that movement along the roads could take place only during the night. Markers 2.5–3 meters high were placed every 25–30 meters along the borders of the mine-cleared belt. Barriers were prepared at prohibited access points on the road.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Passing units did not strengthen them since the night frosts contributed to the hardening of the soil. There was almost no movement on the roads during the day and this promoted their good trafficability during the night. A pontoon-bridge battalion was allocated for the repair, restoration, and strengthening of bridges along the lateral roads, which were rated at less than 30 tons capacity (greater weights were not planned during the regrouping). The lateral road was considered to be a *front* road, and, therefore, movement along it was planned by the *front* staff. This circumstance ensured the timely arrival of formations in their jumping-off positions for the offensive.

Along with the outfitting of the lateral road, the engineer forces also prepared a complete road network in the jumping-off regions for the 4th Guards and 53d Armies' offensive. The engineer forces laid 205 kilometers of roads, which amounted to about 11 kilometers of road per 1 kilometer of penetration sector, from the lateral road to the regions of the artillery positions.

Even after the liberation of Kirovograd, the German-fascist command had continued to strengthen its grouping opposite the 5th Guards Army. The forces of the 5th Guards Army repelled repeated counterattacks. At that time I was situated in the 5th Guards Army. Having received instruction by *VCh* [presumably an enciphered telegram] from the *front* commander concerning the simulation of a deployment region for the 5th Guards Tank Army in connection with its lateral transfer to the right flank, I set about fulfilling the assigned mission.[5] This required false measures and demonstrative actions to convince the enemy that we were continuing to concentrate our tanks and artillery in the region west of Kirovograd.

With my participation, the headquarters of the engineer forces (the chief of the army's engineer forces was Colonel F.G.Podol'ynny), together with the headquarters of army artillery, tank, and mechanized forces under the supervision of the 5th Guards Army's commander and staff, worked out an operational *maskirovka* plan.

A *front maskirovka* company and two engineer battalions from the 14th Assault Engineer-Sapper Brigade (a total of 7 companies) were employed for the conduct of engineer measures to ensure operational *maskirovka*.

From 18 through 22 January, 126 dummy tanks, 30 dummy guns, and 200 scarecrow soldiers were prepared and emplaced in the simulation region. Simultaneously, false firing positions, fuel and ammunition dumps, dug-outs, and slit trenches were prepared. In all, 17 false fuel dumps and 17 dug-outs were created, and 15 slit trenches were dug in the simulation region for the deployment of tank formations.[6]

Tracks were made to simulate the movement of tracked and wheeled vehicles and mock-ups were shifted from place to place to make the simulation regions life-like, *maskirovka* was refreshed, and fires were maintained in readiness to simulate burning tanks during enemy air and artillery strikes. Specially assigned roving guns simulated the regions of force concentration and demonstrated artillery operations within the regions of the main artillery positions.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The demonstrative measures designed to simulate the axis of the main attack in the sector of the 5th Guards Army, which in reality was a secondary sector, vindicated themselves. To some degree the enemy's forces were tied down in that sector.

From 19 through 22 January, a system of communications trenches was developed and household and sanitary trenches were completed. This work was done during the night. Again, the dug-out communications trenches were covered by a deceptive network so that our defensive system, which had been created before the preparations for the penetration, would not be detected.

During this period the clearing of our own mine-fields in the 19-kilometer anticipated penetration sector in front of the forward edge began. There were many mines in the depths of the jumping-off regions, where a previously prepared defensive line had run (up to 18 December). Therefore, continuous mine-clearing of the terrain was required for the protection of the commitment of the 5th Guards Tank Army and the 5th Guards Cavalry Corps into the penetration and for the safe arrival of formations in their jumping-off positions. Overall, during the six days up to 24 January, 41,300 antitank mines were removed through the efforts of our troop and army sappers. By 24 January, we had succeeded in making 90 passages through the enemy's obstacles, calculated on the basis of 1 per each [attacking] rifle company.[7]

The Sukhoi Tashlyk River flowed in front of the forward edge of the defense.[8] During the preparations for the offensive, bridge elements and wood materials for the construction of approaches to the bridges over the swampy flood lands were prepared in the nearby forests. We proposed erecting bridges at every 3 kilometers of river front throughout the width of the penetration sector. These measures made it possible to begin the assembly of bridges across the Sukhoi Tashlyk immediately after the forward battalions had achieved success in combat on 24 January. Thanks to these measures, by daybreak of 25 January the main forces of the rifle divisions had already crossed the river on the prepared bridges.

The prepared enemy defenses in front of the 2d Ukrainian Front's forces, which the enemy had been strengthening for more than a month, and the depth of the operation (the forces were expected to advance 75 kilometers to Zvenigorodka), had an effect on the quantity and density of engineer forces concentrated in the penetration sector. The density of army engineer forces in the 2d Ukrainian Front (in the 4th Guards and 53d Armies) reached up to 5 companies per kilometer (counting engineer forces included in the makeup of the *front* echelon for the development of success [the mobile group]), and *front* densities reached up to 6 companies per kilometer of penetration sector.[9]

The decision to reinforce each first-echelon rifle corps with one engineer battalion was made after the successful operations by the forward battalions. Up to this time, part of the army engineer forces, who were directly subordinate to the army chief of engineer forces, were supporting the rifle corps in the fulfillment of the missions assigned to them by the armies. Army engineer units

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

which were operating in the rifle corps' sectors were tasked with mine-clearing and the preparation of main march routes, the consolidation of achieved lines, and flank protection. The necessity to conduct these [tasks] by means of extensive maneuver along the front required their concentrated employment and, consequently, centralized command and control.

While planning for engineer support, special attention was devoted to the creation of mobile obstacle detachments to protect the left flank of the 53d Army's shock group, the 4th Guards Army's internal encirclement front, and the external encirclement front of the 5th Guards Tank Army after the penetrating force had reached the operational depth.

The decision to form mobile obstacle detachments was necessitated by the presence of enemy tank formations on the external flanks of the armies of the front's shock group, and by the composition of the encircled group.

Mobile obstacle detachments *[POZs]* were formed in all combat formations. In rifle divisions they consisted of one rifle platoon with 200 antitank mines *(PTM),* in rifle corps, of a sapper company with 300 *PTMs,* and, in armies, of two sapper companies with 1,000 *PTMs*. Forward field engineer dumps were organized in the jumping-off positions for the offensive along the line of divisional exchange points, where the armies had 3,000 antitank mines each and the *front* up to 10,000.[10] The mines were transported to divisions and corps by carts and to armies and to front by motor vehicles. On average, an army operating on a main attack axis had 10–15,000 antitank mines each in its *POZs* and in field dumps.

The presence of mines carried by the *POZs* and in the forward engineer field dumps supported the engineer's requirements for mines during the struggle with the enemy along the internal and external encirclement fronts. However, because of the difficulties encountered in transporting the mines and the sharply worsening road conditions during the operation, the delivery of engineer ammunition was made more difficult.

Commanders and political workers conducted party and political work in engineer units and subunits so that the personnel would be prepared in as short a time as possible to fulfill the missions of mine-clearing, road-laying, and overcoming obstacles, and at the same time creating favorable conditions for the successful offensive and the rapid liberation of the Soviet population from the fascist yoke.

The operation began at dawn in the 2d Ukrainian Front's sector with the operations of reinforced forward battalions from the 4th Guards and 53d Armies.[11] One sapper platoon was attached to each battalion. In addition, the passage of the battalions through the barriers and obstacles along the forward edge was supported by the forces of from one to two companies of divisional sappers. This was especially important along axes where the forward edge ran along the Sukhoi Tashlyk River.

After the successful operations by the forward battalions, during the second half of the day the divisional sappers followed them and set about mine-clearing and

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

laying routes for the rifle divisions' main forces. Army sappers moved forward behind the divisional sappers.

On the morning of 25 January, the main forces of the 4th Guards and 53d Armies' first echelon proceeded through the passages which had been cleared of mines to exploit the success achieved by the forward battalions. On this day, the 5th Guards Tank Army was committed into the penetration through the cleared passages in the 53d Army's sector. Later, the 5th Guards Don Cavalry Corps was committed in the 4th Guards Army's sector.

Striving hard to liquidate the penetration, on 27 January the Hitlerites began to launch counterattacks from the north and south in the general direction of Ositniazhka. To support the forces which were fighting to repel the counterattacking enemy tanks and infantry, on the night of 28 January the *front* mobile obstacle detachment, consisting of four engineer battalions under the command of Colonel A.D.Miasnikov and an antitank artillery brigade, protected the 53d Army's shock group from the south.

More than 9,450 antitank and 1,000 antipersonnel mines were emplaced in 7 separate regions.[12] Mines from the *POZs* and mines removed from the former forward edge of the defense were employed for this purpose. This large quantity of mine obstacles reliably protected the southern base of the penetration. On 28 January 5 tanks exploded in minefields along this axis, and, having encountered strong artillery fire, the remainder withdrew. The enemy counterattack failed to achieve success.

To the north, the forces of the 4th Guards Army's *POZ* mined all exits from the forests west of Pastorskoe and, in co-operation with antitank artillery, drove off tank counterattacks.

By order of the *front* commander, its own *POZ* (four battalions of the 5th Engineer-Sapper Brigade) was attached to the 5th Guards Tank Army. After [the tanks army's] commitment into combat, on the night of 30 January, the brigade, which was deployed in two echelons, entered the penetration through a 3-kilometer-wide corridor.

Two engineer battalions mounted in vehicles with high cross-country capability and carrying 3,000 *PTMs* were in the first echelon, and the brigade headquarters and 2 engineer battalions also on vehicles with 2,000 *PTMs* were in the second echelon.

Having completed their march, the 5th Brigade's first echelon received a mission from the commander of the 5th Guards Tank Army commander, General P.A.Rotmistrov, to reinforce the mine obstacles around the strong points on the main march routes leading from the internal encirclement front to the Shpola and Lebedin line. This mission was associated with the counterattacks by the enemy, who was attempting to penetrate in the direction of Ositniazhka. During 30 January the brigade's first echelon emplaced 2,750 antitank mines along the four march routes.

On 31 January the brigade's second echelon, in co-operation with the units of the 18th Tank Corps, began mining the external encirclement front. In

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

connection with the growing necessity to consolidate the defensive sector of the 5th Guards Tank Army's 18th Tank Corps, on 1 February the second *front* mobile obstacle detachment was committed (two battalions of the 27th Motorized Engineer Brigade with 3,000 *PTMs,* which was commanded by Colonel N.S.Vasil'ev).

By 7 February the battalions of the 5th Engineer-Sapper Brigade and the 27th Motorized Engineer Brigade had fully covered the dangerous tank axes into the external encirclement front along the Lebedin and Krymki line, having emplaced 8,340 *PTMs* and constructed 7 kilometers of wood obstructions. This contributed to the failure of the enemy counterattacks in this region. Everywhere, the enemy encountered the fire of our tanks and antitank artillery, which were protected by our antitank minefields. Eight enemy tanks were blown up by mines along the Lebedin and Shpola axis.[13]

Having failed to achieve success along this axis, the Hitlerites began to concentrate motorized infantry and tanks in the Kapustino region, and on 9 February, having occupied the village of Iskrennoe on the opposite bank of the Shpola River, they launched a counterattack to the west of Shpola.

Two engineer battalions of the 5th Engineer-Sapper Brigade, which had been allocated to the 5th Guards Tank Army's reserve and had previously been operating north of Lebedin and Shpola, were immediately transferred here to restore the situation. They did not succeed in fully restoring the situation along this axis. But, since the fascists were thrown back beyond Shpola, it was necessary to consolidate defenses immediately along the Stetsovka and Iurkovka line. To this end, the battalions emplaced 2,000 *PTMs* and blew up 12 bridges across the Shpola River. This considerably strengthened the antitank defenses of the 49th Rifle Corps, which was then attached to the 5th Guards Tank Army.

Having suffered defeat in this region, the Hitlerites began concentrating tanks and motorized infantry in the Stebnoe and Iurkovka region with the aim of launching counterattacks in the direction of Zvenigorodka. In order to protect this axis rapidly, 5,242 mines were delivered and emplaced during 11 and 12 February. Since the roads were becoming more and more impassable for vehicular transport, the mines were brought up by means of packs on two-wheeled carts and carried by the local population from one village to another in relay fashion (two mines per person). The mining here was accomplished by two battalions of the 5th Engineer-Sapper Brigade, which had relocated from the Zvenigorodka region after passing all of their minefields there to the 27th Engineer-Sapper Brigade. Simultaneously, the 4th Guards and 27th Armies' engineer units, which had been transferred to our *front* from the 1st Ukrainian Front on 12 February, carried out mining along the internal encirclement front.

The counterattacks launched from Stebnoe toward Zvenigorodka also produced no results. The enemy lost ten tanks in the minefields.

One should note that, because of the difficulties in the delivery of engineer munitions, mines in the hands of the forces were very often employed twice.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Overall, during the course of operations along the internal and external encirclement fronts and during the 12 days of operations on the 80-kilometer front constituting the operational axes of the 5th Guards Tank and the 27th and 4th Guards Armies alone, 35,400 *PTMs* and 6,600 *PPMs* [antipersonnel mines] were emplaced.[14]

Engineer forces also performed large-scale work on road construction. Up to 30 January, the snow still held out in places, and the roads were in more or less trafficable condition. However, on 31 January the snow began to melt, and the ground became boggy. As a result of the increasingly difficult weather conditions, the *front* commander ordered organized work on the preparation of march routes from the former forward edge to Lebedin, Shpola, and Zvenigorodka. From 1 through 12 February, 3,500 military builders, 5 engineer battalions subordinate to the *front,* 3 road battalions, and up to 300 local inhabitants were working in this sector (a distance of 140 kilometers).[15]

On 13 February a cold spell suddenly set in, and a blizzard arose. While the temperature decreased and the earth firmed up, the roads were chalked over with snow, and their trafficability for vehicles remained as it had been during the *razputitsa* [the period of road impassability]. Only by 17 February were we able to ensure the normal functioning of roads and then only for periods of short duration.[16]

Throughout the operation, the 2d Ukrainian Front's engineer forces repaired, prepared, and serviced 854 kilometers of roads, which, with the overall offensive front of 60 kilometers and a depth of up to 100 kilometers, constituted about 15 kilometers per every 1 kilometer.

The significance of the road construction and repair measures during the operation becomes more understandable if one considers that, from 29 January through 13 February, two rifle corps, seven rifle divisions, and one tank and four artillery brigades were shifted from the *front* left wing to the encirclement region.

Engineer reconnaissance and the mine-clearing of march routes took place throughout the operation. Divisional sappers, deployed in a definite sequence in the combat formations, conducted reconnaissance and prepared passages in the detected minefields; army engineers widened the passages and cleared smaller minefields; and *front* engineers conducted controlled inspections and continuous mine-clearing. Side by side with the mine-clearing of routes, they checked for the presence of mines and demolition bombs in populated points. In the town of Shpola alone, reconnaissance detected 12 mined buildings and installations, where the miners removed 48 demolition bombs.

The victory in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation, achieved with the active participation of the 2d Ukrainian Front's engineer forces, was of great significance. Powerful enemy counterattacks miscarried, and a large grouping of his forces was destroyed.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

The extensive employment of engineer forces made it possible to carry out successful *front* operations in a short period and encircle a large enemy grouping.

The successful actions of engineer forces during the operation were a result of the correct organization of party-political work among the sappers, pontoon-bridge men, and miners and the mobilization of them to overcome the great difficulties which arose during the fulfillment of the diverse missions for the engineer support of an offensive.

Source: A.Tsirlin, 'Inzhenirnye voiska 2-ogo Ukrainskogo fronta v Korsun'-Shevchenkovskoi operatsii' (The Engineer Forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal,* No. 2 (February 1974), 74–9.

NOTES

1. The author of this account served as the chief of the 2d Ukrainian Front's engineer forces during the preparation for and conduct of the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation.
2. *Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina Sovetskogo Soiuza. Kratkaia istoriia* (The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union: A Short History) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970), 320 and *Dokumenty istorii Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Documents on the History of the Great Patriotic War), 10–11.
3. *Arkhiv MO,* F. 240, Op. 2797, D. 336, LL. 59–60, 82, 83.
4. Ibid., D. 545, L. 3.
5. I.S.Konev, *Zapiski komanduiushchego frontom* (Notes of a *Front* Commander) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1972), 99.
6. *Arkhiv MO,* F. 240, Op. 2797, D. 545, L. 2.
7. Ibid.
8. In mid-January 1944, the Sukhoi Tashlyk River (30–35 meters wide and 1.2–1.7 meters deep) was covered by 5–10 centimeters of ice.
9. *Arkhiv MO,* F. 240, Op. 2797, D. 545, L. 1.
10. *Arkhiv MO,* F. 240, Op. 2797, D. 545, L. 4.
11. See I.S.Konev, *Zapiski,* 100–1.
12. *Arkhiv MO,* F. 240, Op. 2797, D. 545, L. 4.
13. *Arkhiv MO,* F. 240, Op. 2797, D. 545, LL. 4–5.
14. *Arkhiv MO,* F. 240, Op. 2797, D. 29, L. 5.
15. Ibid., F. 69, Op. 81651, D. 29, L. 181.
16. I.S.Konev, *Zapiski,* 115.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 5: The Functioning of Transport and the Organization of the Delivery of Materiel Supplies in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

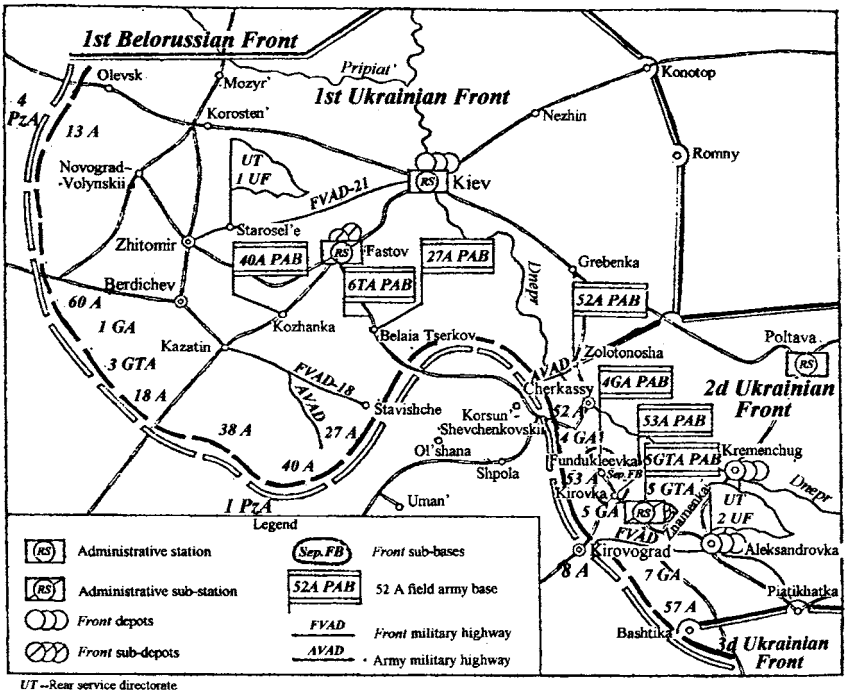
As is well known, during the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (24 January–17 February 1944), the forces of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian Fronts (commanded by Army General N.F.Vatutin and Army General I.S.Konev) encircled and liquidated a large enemy grouping, which consisted of 8 divisions, 1 brigade, and separate units and subunits. It is characteristic that, before the beginning of the operation, *front* forces had practically no operational pause, since the Zhitomir-Berdichev and Kirovograd operations had been completed only on 14–16 January. In addition, at the same time as the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation, the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front's right wing conducted the Rovno-Lutsk operation (27 January–11 February 1944) (see Map 14).

Rear service support of forces in the operation was carried out under adverse conditions associated with the unexpected beginning of a thaw and resulting road impassability which severely hindered the functioning of transport and the organization of materiel supply. During this period rear service organs were simultaneously supporting forces which were conducting combat operations to liquidate the encircled grouping and repelling enemy counterattacks against the external encirclement front. During the course of preceding operations, the *front* rear area had been stretched out for hundreds of kilometers. The reserves of materiel supplies in the forces had decreased. In some armies, for example, a total of from 0.5 up to 1 combat load of ammunition and from 0.6 up to 1.2 refills of fuel remained. The forces were also experiencing great shortages of clothing, especially leather shoes.

During their withdrawal the fascists inflicted great damage on the railroads. Thus, in a 92-kilometer sector along the Kirovograd axis in the 2d Ukrainian Front sector (whose chief of rear services was Lieutenant-General of the Quartermaster Service V.I.Vostrukhov), railroad ties were destroyed by right-of-way destroyers, and the rails were blown up. Along one of the railroad axes in the sector of the 1st Ukrainian Front, the enemy destroyed 50,000 railroad ties.[1]

The shock groups of both *fronts* had only one railroad sector each. *Front* depots were situated 80–160 kilometers (1st Ukrainian Front) and 120–180 kilometers (2d Ukrainian Front), army depots 45–50 kilometers, and divisional depots 8–10 kilometers from their forces. Armies disposed of one-two roads and divisions one road for the supply of materiel.[2]

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 14. Rear-service organs and supply routes in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation

During the preparation of the operation, the Directorate for Military Construction Work No. 3 *(Upravlenie voenno-vostanovitel'nykh rabot No. 3-UVVR-3),* which consisted of the 7th, 14th, and 19th Railroad Brigades (the chief of the directorate was Major-General of Technical Forces P.A.Kabanov), conducted the restoration of the railroads in the 1st Ukrainian Front's sector (the chief of the rear was Lieutenant-General I.M.Loginov). Despite the large volume of restoration work required, the period when movement would have to resume was established by taking into account the beginning of the forthcoming operation and ensuring the minimally necessary cargo capacity of the railroads.

The complex nature of the delivery of construction materiel from other regions of the country gave rise to the necessity to search out and prepare them on the spot. For the first time in the war, the railroad forces were forced to exploit local materiel extensively. For example, in the 1st Ukrainian Front, logs from dismantled buildings were used extensively instead of railroad ties. Half-ties were even used, and were stacked together into a single whole. Consequently, this required a large volume of additional work substituting them and continually correcting the lines. However, there was no other way. Clamps and other forged pieces necessary to restore the railroad lines and other structures on the railroad line were manufactured from materials removed from out-of-commission trophy

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

[captured] railroad cars. The manufactured clamps were often delivered by Po-2 aircraft to the sector of the railroad being restored.

Because of the great destruction, trains running along the Southwestern railroad traveled slowly. Thus, the speed of operational trains was generally 50–90 kilometers per day and of supply trains 30–70 kilometers per day. The average speed of cargo trains in the Nezhin-Daritsa sector (112 kilometers) did not exceed 3–4 kilometers per hour. Even priority trains carrying tanks and artillery covered this distance in 44–47 hours. As a result of the low-load capacity of the sector of the Southwestern railroad, 21,600 rail cars accumulated, compared with a norm of 8,000. The most complicated conditions occurred at the stations in the Kiev center. Over 3,000 rail cars were located at the Daritsa Station alone, and more than 2,500 at other stations.

To correct the existing situation along the Southwestern railroad, a group of responsible workers from the *TsUP VOSO* [Central Industrial Directorate] and the *NKPS* [People's Commissariat of Industry and supply] arrived, who took emergency measures to normalize the functioning of the railroads. The loading and unloading of medical trains was carried out at less crowded stations. The supplying of the Southwestern railroad with construction materiel and the filling out of cadres at the expense of *NKPS* personnel and equipment was improved. In the 1st Ukrainian Front, officers from military communications organs were assigned to accompany urgent troop trains from the administrative *front* station (Kiev) to the unloading points.

During the operation, materiel supplies for the 1st Ukrainian Front's shock group were moved along the railroad sector from *front* depots deployed in the Fastov Station region to Belaia Tserkov', where they were distributed to the *PABs* [field army bases] of the 6th Tank and 27th Armies. In the 2d Ukrainian Front, they were delivered from the *main front* depots deployed in the Znamenka Station region to Fundukleevka, where the separate *front* dumps and the *PABs* of the 4th Guards and 5th Guards Tank Armies were located.

At the beginning of the operation, the work situation of the automotive [vehicular] service was unfavorable. In spite of the emergency measures undertaken to repair vehicles in principal, the situation did not improve. Thus, in the 1st Ukrainian Front, there were only 3,554 vehicles on hand out of 6,508 required by establishment [TO&E], that is, 54.6 per cent, while 27.9 per cent of the vehicles were under repair. The load-bearing capacity of the operational auto-transport element amounted to only 4,964 tons and this was clearly insufficient.[3] In the 2d Ukrainian Front, the shortages in vehicles in *front* and army supply units amounted to 56 per cent, of which 34.6 per cent were under repair. The load-bearing capacity of operational vehicles amounted to 4,540 tons.[4] Consequently, during the preparation of the operation, the *front* and army Military Councils devoted much attention to the organization of materiel supply by vehicular transport. For example, in the 1st Ukrainian Front, the main efforts of the 16th Automobile Brigade (the 59th, 60th and 61st Auto-tranport Regiments) were concentrated on the support of forces on the central axis and

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

the *front* left wing. The brigade's regiments were stationed in the Zhitomir region, and the 21st Auto-transport Regiment was situated in Kiev and constituted the *front* reserve.[5] During the operation it was planned to allocate part of its strength to support the main shock grouping.

In the complicated situation during preparations for the operation, new methods were found for organizing the delivery of materiel supplies to the forces, and more rational means were worked out for exploiting automobile units. Thus, while operating along permanent march routes in the 2d Ukrainian Front, vehicles traveled in small columns. This permitted the abandonment of technical accompaniment for each column and the creation of a series of permanent technical assistance points, which were deployed along the movement routes, and the centralized use of repair forces and equipment. Vehicles began to be restored and repaired in a compressed period of time on the immediate spot of the breakdown.

The experiences gained by the 1st Ukrainian Front in organizing priority vehicular transport over great distances also merits attention. Having received preliminary instructions regarding transport, the headquarters of the automobile regiment (or separate battalion) quickly sent out reconnaissance along the movement route. Mobile technical repair detachments, which were deployed in regions planned ahead of time by the headquarters, followed them. As a rule, the delivery of cargo a distance of 150–200 kilometers was accomplished in a single trip. Top priority automobile columns were accompanied by guards. The unit and formation commanders were made personally responsible for the condition of the vehicles making the trip. The movement of the column along the route was systematically controlled by dispatcher posts at control-passage points. *Front* and army refueling points were established side by side with the technical assistance points. Given the use of such methods, the maintenance requirements associated with ordinary vehicular columns on the march were significantly reduced.

At the beginning of February in the Ukraine, a warm spell suddenly set in, and the rains began. Roads which lacked hard surfaces became impassable. Under these difficult conditions a dispersed form of delivering cargoes was employed extensively in the 2d Ukrainian Front.[6] This [form] had already been employed by the Stalingrad Front during the fall of 1942. This means was more fully developed in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation. Thus, staging points were organized at the junctions of main and cargo roads and in regions where the 20th Automobile Brigade was operating. Such a means of transport provided the possibility, even in severe weather conditions, to reduce the daily run of vehicles to 70–80 kilometers, which, in turn, permitted the brigade to transport more than 100,000 tons of cargo throughout the operation, having carried out 24,000 vehicular trips.[7]

Rest points for personnel were created along the march routes, where the drivers could rest, receive hot food, read new newspapers, and learn about conditions along the march route. Overall, more than 50 such points were in operation in the *FVADs* [transport routes] of the 1st Ukrainian Front. These

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

serviced about 26,000 persons during the operation.[8] This movement organization and the support of drivers with all that was necessary permitted the vehicles to function without stopping at their subunits' field parks, and that saved considerable time.

Work in the loading regions at supply stations was carefully organized in the 2d Ukrainian Front. Operational groups, which consisted of representatives of all *front* services, including officers from the *front's* Automobile and *VOSO* Directorates, were sent to these loading points. A group from the *front* rear service headquarters received information about the deployment of automobile transport along the supply march routes as well as about deliveries by railroad trains. It transmitted this information to the chief of the loading region, who regulated the allocation of vehicles for shipment and their entry onto the march routes. If an alteration was required in the march route of any column, the operational group immediately gave telephonic instructions about this to the control-passage points. This excluded superfluous runs by vehicles, since communications about the re-addressing of each supply column were transmitted throughout the journey.

The dispatcher groups, which had been sent to the control-passage points along the march routes, noted the column's time of passage and reported about this to the operational group, which, after a meeting and discussion of the information received, passed it to the headquarters of the *front's* rear services. Given such a work organization, the automobile directorate constantly had information about the location of automobile columns and exercised control over the fulfillment of assigned orders.

An enormous amount of work was carried out during the preparatory period on the repair of auto transport. Repair units in the *fronts* specialized in the repair of pre-determined types of vehicles. Each separate repair-restoration battalion specialized on the repair of two to three specific types of vehicles, since *front* and army auto-transport was of various types.

To a considerable degree, the precise functioning of auto-transport and the timely delivery of materiel supplies depended on road maintenance. On the basis of experience accumulated in previous operations, *front* road units performed their road restoration work in the most rational sequence given the complicated conditions. Thus, mobile advance army road units went on ahead to support the army's first-echelon formations. They restored roads and bridges in a relatively short period. Units subordinate to the *fronts* followed them (the second echelon of road forces) and completed the restoration of temporary artificial structures and constructed military-automobile roads within the limits of the *front* rear area. The third echelon of road forces consisted of units subordinated to the Soviet Army's Main Road Directorate. They performed capital construction and restoration work.[9]

In connection with the early thaw, the conditions of road maintenance sharply worsened during the course of the operation. Especially severe conditions were experienced within the 1st Ukrainian Front's sector. In a combat order of 5

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

February, the *front* commander demanded that army and corps commanders implement emergency measures to ensure uninterrupted support of forces with ammunition, fuel, and provisions. They were required to organize constant duty tractor service along the impassable road sectors. They were ordered to include tractors, employ tracked transport to the maximum, and, on short distances, use carts in their automobile columns. The responsibility of the Armies' Military Council members for organizing the deliveries increased.[10]

The road forces in the 2d Ukrainian Front were unable to cope with the work of road restoration and, therefore, the Military Council decided to enlist the local population in the effort. The Workers Councils of provinces and regions were obliged to allocate, in accordance with the road units directives, the necessary quantity of workers on the basis of compulsory paid labor.

Because of the rains, at the beginning of February the ice began flowing on the rivers ahead of schedule. During three days (11–13 February), the water level on the Dnepr River rose by 88 centimeters. The ice damaged the bridge at Cherkassy, and materiel supplies by rail transport began to be diverted through Kremenchug.[11] The most severe difficulties arose in the realm of supplying the troops. Here, transport by cart and by pack was extensively employed. Often cargo was passed from automobile to carts and back every 10–15 kilometers. Several hundred horses and strong teams labored in each and every formation. The personnel of reserve units themselves often delivered ammunition to the artillery firing positions. Aviation, which completed 1,200 sorties for those purposes, was extensively employed to provide the forces with fuel and ammunition, in particular the tank armies.[12] For example, from 8 through 16 February, the 2d Air Army's 326th Night Bomber Aviation Division delivered 49 tons of fuel and 65 tons of ammunition to the 2d and 6th Tank Armies.[13] Automobile detachments with ammunition and fuel were allocated for the delivery of materiel supplies to the mechanized and cavalry corps. As a rule, they were accompanied by tanks and self-propelled guns, which were employed to push the machines through impassable sectors.

On 6 February the 2d Ukrainian Front's Military Council decided to move the *front's* reserves of materiel supplies closer to the forces. A section of the *front* base was moved forward to the last railroad stations at Fundukleevka and Khirovka. One hundred to 120 wagons of materiel supplies began to arrive at these locations daily for the forces of the 53d, 4th Guards, and 5th Guards Tank Armies.[14]

As a result of the great obligations placed on army transport, the *fronts* often reinforced the armies with auto-transport subunits subordinated to the *fronts*. For example, during the operation the 4th Guards Army's auto-transport was reinforced by 70 vehicles from the *front's* 20th Automobile Brigade, which allowed the army to move detachments with fuel and ammunition forward. Combat vehicles and artillery tractors were also enlisted to deliver materiel supplies to the forces. The crews of tanks attached barrels of fuel to their armor, which also significantly increased the autonomy of their operations.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Front rear service organs dealt with the reduction in the volume of supplies and, first and foremost, fuel and provisions, at the expense of extensive exploitation of trophies [captured materiel] and the procurement of materiel supplies from local resources. The 2d Ukrainian Front's 53d Army alone stockpiled 18,776 tons of grain, 6,218 tons of potatoes and vegetables, 325 tons of meat, and many other products.

Despite the great difficulties encountered in organizing the delivery of materiel supplies during the course of the operation, the *front* and army rear service organs provided the forces with all that was necessary. Thus, the enemy First Panzer Army panzer grouping, which penetrated to Lysianka, sometimes received no ammunition, fuel, and provisions at all.[15]

The experience of the work of transport and the organization of the delivery of materiel supplies in the roadless conditions during the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation was extensively exploited subsequently. It merits deep study during the preparation of rear service forces and headquarters in modern conditions.

Source: I.Karpushin, 'Rabota transporta i organizatsiia podvoza materiial'nykh sredstv v Korsun'-Shevchenkovskoi operatsii' (The Functioning of Transport and the Organization of the Delivery of Materiel Supplies in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal,* No. 2 (February 1984), 45–50.

NOTES

1. *TsAMO SSSR,* F. 16, Op. 257232, D. 153, L. 75.
2. *Operatsii Sovietskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941–1945 g., T. 3* (Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945, Vol. 3) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958), 111.
3. *TsAMO,* F. 67, Op. 20089, D. 43, L. 31.
4. Ibid., D. 48, L. 51.
5. Ibid., F. 236, Op. 41808, D. 22, L. 58.
6. For more details on the dispersed form of delivery, see *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal,* No. 8 (August 1977), 100.
7. *Tyl Sovietskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine* (The Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1977), 272.
8. *TsAMO,* F. 67, Op. 20089, D. 43, L. 62.
9. *Tyl Sovietskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine,* 286.
10. *TsAMO,* F. 395, Op. 10023, D. 2, LL. 278–79.
11. *TsAMO,* F. 67, Op. 20089, L. 43, L. 62.
12. *Sovietskaia Voennaia Entsiklopediia, T. 4* (The Soviet Military Encyclopedia, Vol. 4) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1977), 378.
13. *Istoriia Vtoroi Mirovoi Voiny 1939–1945, T. 8* (History of the Second World War, 1939–1945, Vol. 8) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1977), 74–75.
14. *TsAMO,* F. 67, Op. 20089, D. 46, L. 73.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

15. *Istoria vtoroi mirovoi voiny 1939–1945, T. 8* (History of the Second World War, 1939–1945, Vol. 8), 75.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 6:
Soviet Order of Battle in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation (as of 1 February 1944)

1ST UKRAINIAN FRONT

27th Army
- 47th Rifle Corps
  - 136th Rifle Division
  - 167th Rifle Division
  - 359th Rifle Division
- 180th Rifle Division
- 206th Rifle Division
- 337th Rifle Division
- 54th Fortified Region
- 159th Fortified Region
- 298th Guards SP Arty Regiment
- 713th SP Arty Regiment
- 1892d SP Arty Regiment
- 881st AT Arty Regiment
- 480th Mortar Regiment
- 492d Mortar Regiment
- 329th Guards Mortar Regiment
- 25th Sep. Engineer Battalion
- 38th Sep. Engineer Battalion
- 21st Sep. Bridge Battalion

40th Army
- 50th Rifle Corps
  - 4th Gds. Airborne Division
- 14th Sep. Engineer Battalion
- 4th Sep. Bridge Battalion

6th Tank Army
- 38th Rifle Division
- 240th Rifle Division
- 340th Rifle Division
- 51st Rifle Corps
  - 42d Gds. Rifle Division
  - 163d Rifle Division
  - 232d Rifle Division
- 104th Rifle Corps
  - 58th Rifle Division
  - 74th Rifle Division
  - 133d Rifle Division
- 1898th SP Arty Regiment
- 33d Gun Arty Brigade
- 111th Gds. How. Arty Regiment
- 1528th How. Arty Regiment
- 28th AT Arty Brigade
- 4th Gds. AT Arty Regiment
- 317th AT Arty Regiment
- 680th AT Regiment
- 9th Mountain Mortar Regiment
- 10th Mountain Mortar Regiment
- 493d Mortar Regiment
- 9th AA Arty Division
  - (800, 974, 981, 993 AA Regts.)

2d Air Army
- 5th Assault Aviation Corps
  - 4th Gds. AA Division
  - 264th AA Division

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

5th Mechanized Corps
2d Mechanized Brigade
9th Mechanized Brigade
45th Mechanized Brigade
233d Tank Brigade
745th SP Arty Regiment
1228th SP Arty Regiment
1827th Hvy SP Arty Regiment
64th Motorcycle Battalion
458th Mortar Regiment
35th Gds. Mortar Battalion
1700th A A Arty Regiment
5th Guards Tank Corps
20th Gds. Tank Brigade
21st Gds. Tank Brigade
22d Gds. Tank Brigade
6th Gds. Mot. Rifle Brigade
1416th SP Arty Regiment
1458th SP Arty Regiment
1462d SP Arty Regiment
80th Motorcycle Battalion
1667th AT Arty Regiment
754th Sep. AT Battalion
454th Mortar Regiment
1696th A A Arty Regiment
156th Sep. Tank Regiment
181st Sep. Engineer Battalion

5th Fighter Aviation Corps
8th Gds. FA Division
256th FA Division
10th Fighter Aviation Corps
10th Gds. FA Division
235th FA Division
202d Bomber Aviation Division
227th Assault Aviation Division
291st Assault Aviation Division
208th Night BA Division
326th Night BA Division
19th Fighter Aviation Regiment
50th Recon. Aviation Regiment
372d Sep. Aviation Signal Regt
385th Sep. Aviation Signal Regt
8th Civil Air Fleet Air Regt.
51st Aviation Correction Squadron
60th Aviation Correction Squadron
66th Aviation Correction Squadron
1554th Antiaircraft Arty Regiment
1555th Antiaircraft Arty Regiment
1605th Antiaircraft Arty Regiment

2D UKRAINIAN FRONT

4th Guards Army
20th Guards Rifle Corps
5th Gds. Airborne Division
7th Gds. Airborne Division
62d Gds. Rifle Division
31st Rifle Division
21st Guards Rifle Corps
69th Gds. Rifle Division
94th Gds. Rifle Division
252d Rifle Division
375th Rifle Division
173d Tank Brigade
57th Sep. Tank Regiment
60th Sep. Tank Regiment
42d Light Artillery Brigade
97th Hvy. How. Arty Regiment
98th Hvy. How. Arty Regiment
568th Gun Arty Regiment
1328th Gun Arty Regiment
438th AT Regiment
122d Sep. AT Rifle Battalion
189th Sep. Tank Regiment
16th Artillery Penetration Division

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

452d AT Regiment
466th Mortar Regiment
27th AA Artillery Division
(1354, 1358, 1364, 1370 AA Regts.)
27th Sep. Asslt Eng.-Sapper Bn.
48th Sep. Engineer Battalion
69th Sep. Engineer Battalion

52d Army
73d Rifle Corps
254th Rifle Division
294th Rifle Division
78th Rifle Corps
373d Rifle Division
1322d AT Regiment
38th Antiaircraft Division
(1404, 1405, 1409, 1712 AA Regts.)
133d Sep. Sapper Battalion
135th Sep. Sapper Battalion
366th Sep. Engineer battalion

53d Army
26th Guards Rifle Corps
1st Gds. Airborne Division
25th Gds. Rifle Division
6th Rifle Division
48th Rifle Corps
14th Gds. Rifle Division
66th Gds. Rifle Division
89th Gds. Rifle Division
75th Rifle Corps
138th Rifle Division
213th Rifle Division
233d Rifle Division
78th Guards Rifle Division
214th Rifle Division
63d Rifle Division

1834th Hvy. SP Arty Regiment
1895th SP Arty Regiment
61st Gun Arty Brigade
52d How. Arty Brigade
90th Hvy. How. Arty Brigade
109th HP How. Arty Brigade
14th Mortar Brigade
31st Light Artillery Brigade
1327th Gun Artillery Regiment
33d AT Artillery Regiment
1316th AT Artillery Regiment
461st Mortar Regiment
30th Antiaircraft Division
(1361, 1367, 1373, 1375 AA Regts.)
11th Sep. Engineer Battalion
13th Sep. Engineer Battalion
56th Aviation Correction Squadron

5th Guards Tank Army
18th Tank Corps
110th Tank Brigade
170th Tank Brigade
181st Tank Brigade
32d Motorized Rifle Brigade
1438th SP Arty Regiment
1543d Hvy. SP Arty Regiment
78th Motorcycle Battalion
1000th AT Arty Regiment
736th Sep. AT Arty Battalion
292d Mortar Regiment
106th Gds. Mortar Battalion
1694th A A Arty Regiment
20th Tank Corps
8th Gds. Tank Brigade
80th Tank Brigade
155th Tank Brigade
7th Gds. Motorized Rifle Brigade

4th Fighter Aviation Corps
294th FA Division
302d FA Division

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

96th Motorcycle Battalion
1505th AT Arty Regiment
735th Sep. AT Arty Battalion
291st Mortar Regiment
406th Gds. Mortar Battalion
1711th A A Arty Regiment
29th Tank Corps
25th Tank Brigade
31st Tank Brigade
32d Tank Brigade
53d Motorized Rifle Brigade
1446th SP Arty Regiment
1549th Hvy. SP Arty Regiment
75th Motorcycle Battalion
108th AT Arty Regiment
271st Mortar Regiment
11th Gds. Mortar Battalion
53d Guards Sep. Tank Regiment
1st Guards Motorcycle Regiment
678th How. Arty Regiment
689th AT Arty Regiment
6th Antiaircraft Arty Division
(146, 366, 516, 1062 AA Arty Regts.)
377th Sep. Engineer Battalion
994th Night Bomber Aviation Regt.

5th Air Army
1st Bomber Aviation Corps
1st Gds. BA Division
293d BA Division
1st Assault Aviation Corps
266th AA Division
292d AA Division
203d FA Division
6th Assault Aviation Corps
197th AA Division
198th AA Division
7th Fighter Aviation Corps
205th FA Division
304th FA Division
312th Night BA Division
511th Recon. Aviation Regiment
714th Sep. Aviation Signal Regt.
18th Civil Air Fleet Air Regt.
85th Aviation Correction Squadron
1561st Antiaircraft Arty Regiment
1562d Antiaircraft Arty Regiment

Front Subordination
49th Rifle Corps
6th Gds. Airborne Division
80th Gds. Rifle Division
84th Rifle Division
5th Guards Cavalry Corps
11th Guards Cavalry Division
12th Guards Cavalry Division
63d Cavalry Division
1896th SP Artillery Regiment
150th Guards AT Regiment
5th Guards Sep. AT Arty Battalion
72nd Guards-Mortar Battalion
9th Guards-Mortar Regiment
585th AA Arty Regiment
130th Sep. AT Rifle Battalion
7th Mechanized Corps
16th Mechanized Brigade
63d Mechanized Brigade
64th Mechanized Brigade
41st Guards Tank Brigade
1440th SP Arty Regiment
1821st SP Arty Regiment
94th Motorcycle Battalion
109th AT Arty Regiment
392nd Sep. AT Arty Battalion
614th Mortar Regiment

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 7: Charts and Tables on Red Army Strength and Losses in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation

1. 1ST UKRAINIAN FRONT'S STRENGTH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE KORSUN'-SHEVCHENKOVSKII OPERATION

	Armies				
Forces and weaponry	*27 A*	*40 A*	*6 TA*	*2 AA*	*Total*
Personnel	28,348	33,726	24,423	2,709	89,206
Rifles	14,206	16,088	9,772	482	40,548
Automatics	3,474	6,728	7,819	30	18,051
Machine-guns	1,458	1,068	755	–	3,281
AT rifles	658	841	478	–	1,977
Guns (45mm+)	468	445	96	–	1,009
Mortars (82mm)	307	372	83	–	762
Mortars (50mm)	112	66	–	–	178
AA guns	–	32	34	–	66
MRLs:					
BM-8 and BM-13	24	39	–	–	63
M-30	36	270	–	–	306
Tanks	–	–	168	–	168
SP guns	–	–	22	–	22
Armored cars	–	–	39	–	39
Vehicles	466	1,218	1,273	29	2,986
Tractors	–	18	1	–	19
Radios	341	169	190	–	700
Horses	4,956	5,096	–	–	10,052

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

2. 2D UKRAINIAN FRONT'S STRENGTH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE KORSUN'-SHEVCHENKOVSKII OPERATION

	Armies						
Forces and weaponry	*52 A*	*4 GA*	*53 A*	*5 GTA*	*5 AA*	*Reserve*	*Total*
Personnel	15,886	45,653	54,043	22,301	7,618	20,258	165,759
Rifles	7,930	20,285	25,323	6,990	1,500	9,832	71,860
Automatics	2,974	9,257	11,230	5,338	347	5,017	34,163
Machine-guns	748	1,317	1,304	450	–	672	4,491
AT rifles	314	1,084	1,006	256	–	371	3,031
Guns (45mm+)	167	581	611	122	–	187	1,668
Mortars (82mm+)	184	460	467	189	–	160	1,460
Mortars (50mm)	24	42	16	–	–	7	89
AA guns	64	62	58	102	–	49	335
MRLs:							
BM-8 and BM-13	–	44	20	27	–	12	103
M-30	–	–	282	–	–	–	282
Tanks	–	27	21	178	–	57	283
SP guns	–	2	–	19	–	19	40
Armored cars	–	14	3	6	–	–	23
Vehicles	502	2,358	2,011	1,297	112	791	7,071
Tractors	2	220	150	6	–	–	378
Radios	121	502	778	254	–	126	1,781
Horses	2,958	5,927	7,737	–	–	14,113	30,735

3. TOTAL STRENGTH OF THE 1ST AND 2D UKRAINIAN FRONTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE KORSUN'-SHEVCHENKOVSKII OPERATION

Forces and weaponry	*Total*
Personnel	254,965
Rifles	112,408
Automatics	52,214
Machine-guns	7,772
AT rifles	5,008
Guns (45mm+)	2,677
Mortars (82mm+)	2,222
Mortars (50mm)	267
AA guns	401
MRLs:	
BM-8 and BM-13	166
M-30	588

Forces and weaponry	*Total*
Tanks	451
SP guns	62
Armored cars	62
Vehicles	10,057
Tractors	397
Radios	2,481
Horses	40,787

Source: N.Tereshchenko, 'Korsun'-Shevchenkovskaia operatsiia v tsifrakh' (The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation in Figures), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal,* No. 7 (July 1969), 49.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

4. TOTAL STRENGTH AND LOSSES IN THE KORSUN'-SHEVCHENKOVSKII OPERATION

	Losses			
Total strength	*Irrevocable*	*Medical*	*Total*	*Per Day*
336,700	24,286	55,902	80,188	3,208

Source: G.F.Krivosheev, *Grif sekretnosti sniat: poteri vooruzhennykh sil SSSR v voinakh, boevykh deistviiakh i voennykh konfliktakh* (Classification Secret Removed: The Losses of the Soviet Armed Forces in Wars, Combat Operations, and Military Conflicts) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1993), 227.

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 8: Key Soviet Command Cadre in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation (as of 1 February 1944)

1st UKRAINIAN FRONT
Commander—Army General N.F.Vatutin
Chief of Staff—Lieu tenant-General A.N.Bogoliubov
Commissar—Lieutenant-General N.S.Khrushchev

40th Army
Commander—Lieutenant-General F.F.Zhmachenko
Chief of Staff—Major-General V.M.Sharapov
Commissar—Major-General K.P.Kulik

27th Army
Commander—Lieutenant-General S.G.Trofimenko
Chief of Staff—Major-General G.S.Luk'ianchenko
Commissar—Major-General I.P.Shevchenko

6th Tank Army
Commander—Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces S.A.Kravchenko
Chief of Staff—Major-General D.N.Zaev
Commissar—Major-General of Tank Forces G.P.Tumanian
CO, 5th Guards Tank Corps—Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces V.M.Alekseev
CO, 5th Mechanized Corps—Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces M.V.Volkhov

2d Air Army
Commander—Lieutenant-General of Aviation S.A.Krasovsky
Chief of Staff—Major-General of Aviation F.I.Kachev
Commissar—Major-General of Aviation S.N.Romazanov

2d UKRAINIAN FRONT
Commander—Army General I.S.Konev
Chief of Staff—Colonel-General M.V.Zakharov
Commissar—Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces I.Z.Susaikov

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

4th Guards Army
Commander—Major-General A.I.Ryzhov (to 2.2.44)
Lieutenant-General I.K.Smirnov
Chief of Staff—Major-General P.M.Verkholovich
Commissar—Major-General I.A.Gavrilov
52d Army
Commander—Lieutenant-General K.A.Koroteev
Chief of Staff—Major-General A.N.Kolominov
Commissar—Major-General A.F.Bobrov
53d Army
Commander—Lieutenant-General I.V.Galanin
Chief of Staff—Major-General I.I.Vorob'ev
Commissar—Major-General P.I.Gorokhov
5th Guards Tank Army
Commander—Colonel-General of Tank Forces P.A.Rotmistrov
Chief of Staff—Major-General of Tank Forces V.N.Baskakov
Commissar—Major-General of Tank Forces P.G.Grishin
CO, 18th Tank Corps—Major-General of Tank Forces V.I.Polozkov
CO, 20th Tank Corps—Lieutenant-General of Tank Forces I.G.Lazarov
CO, 29th Tank Corps—Major-General of Tank Forces I.F.Kirichenko
5th Air Army
Commander—Lieutenant-General of Aviation S.K.Goriunov
Chief of Staff—Major-General N.G.Seleznev
Commissar—Colonel V.I.Smirnov
5th Guards Cavalry Corps
Commander—Major-General A.G.Selivanov
Commissar—Colonel F.S.Plantov

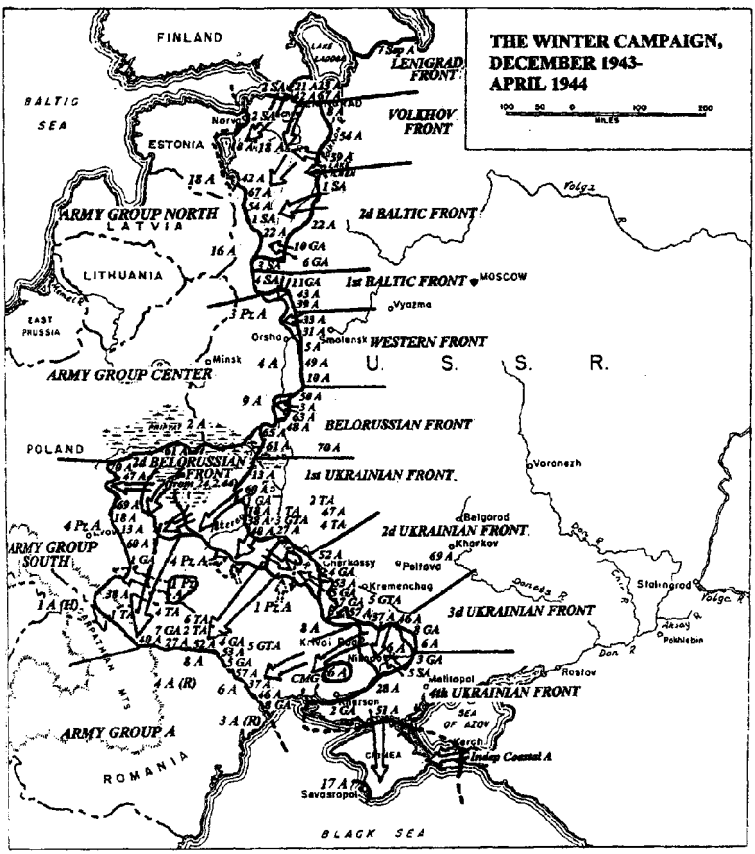
Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 9: Strength of Selected German Armored Formations in the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii Operation (based on archival reports)

24–26 January	*Total*
SS 'LAH'—24 Mk IV, 28 Mk VI (Panthers), 15 assault guns	67
Pz Det.503–33 Mk VI (Panthers)	33
II, Pz Det 23–47 Mk V (Tigers)	47
SS 'Viking'—40 tanks, 10 assault guns	50
3 February	
SS 'LAH'—20 Mk IV, 12 Mk V, 15 assault guns	47
8 February	
SS 'LAH'—8 Mk V (Tigers), 4 Mk VI (Panthers), 11 assault guns	23
1 Pz Div—50 Mk V (Tigers)	50
Pz Det 506–12 Mk VI (Panthers)	12

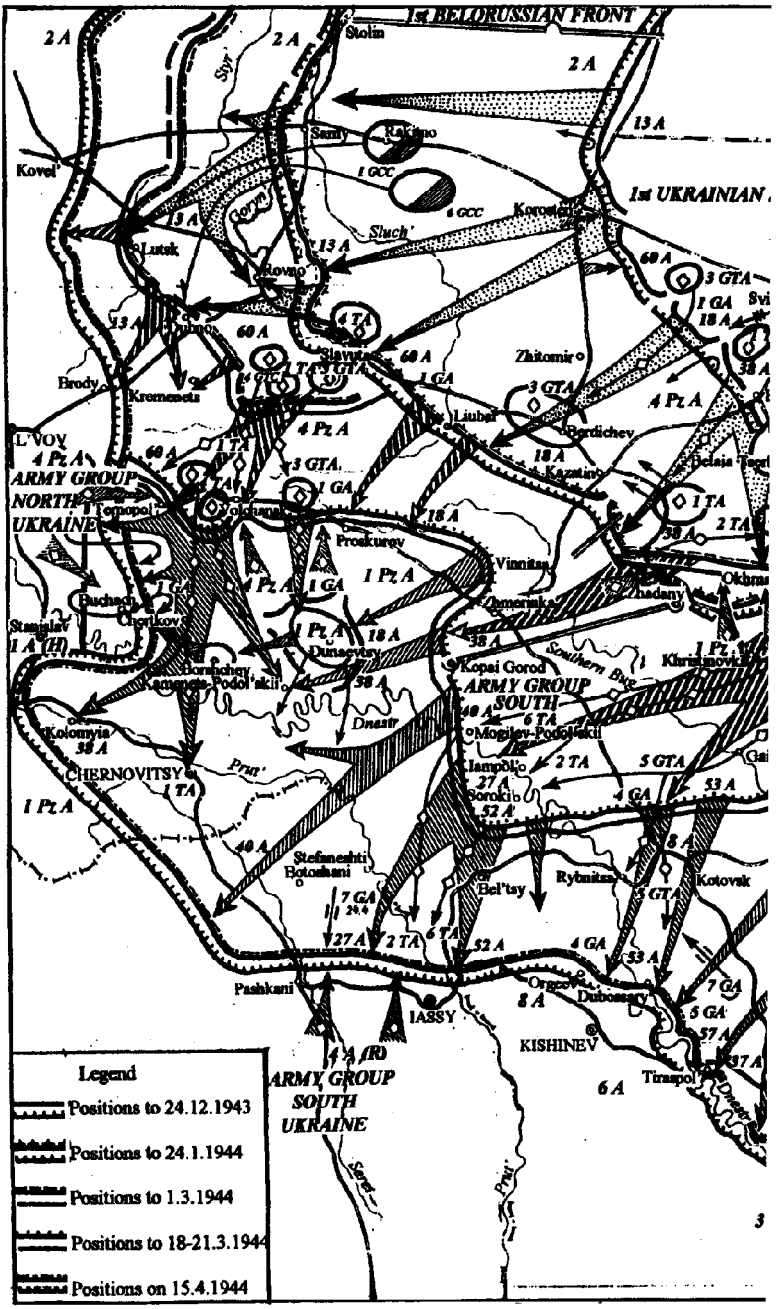
Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein

Appendix 10: Map Supplement



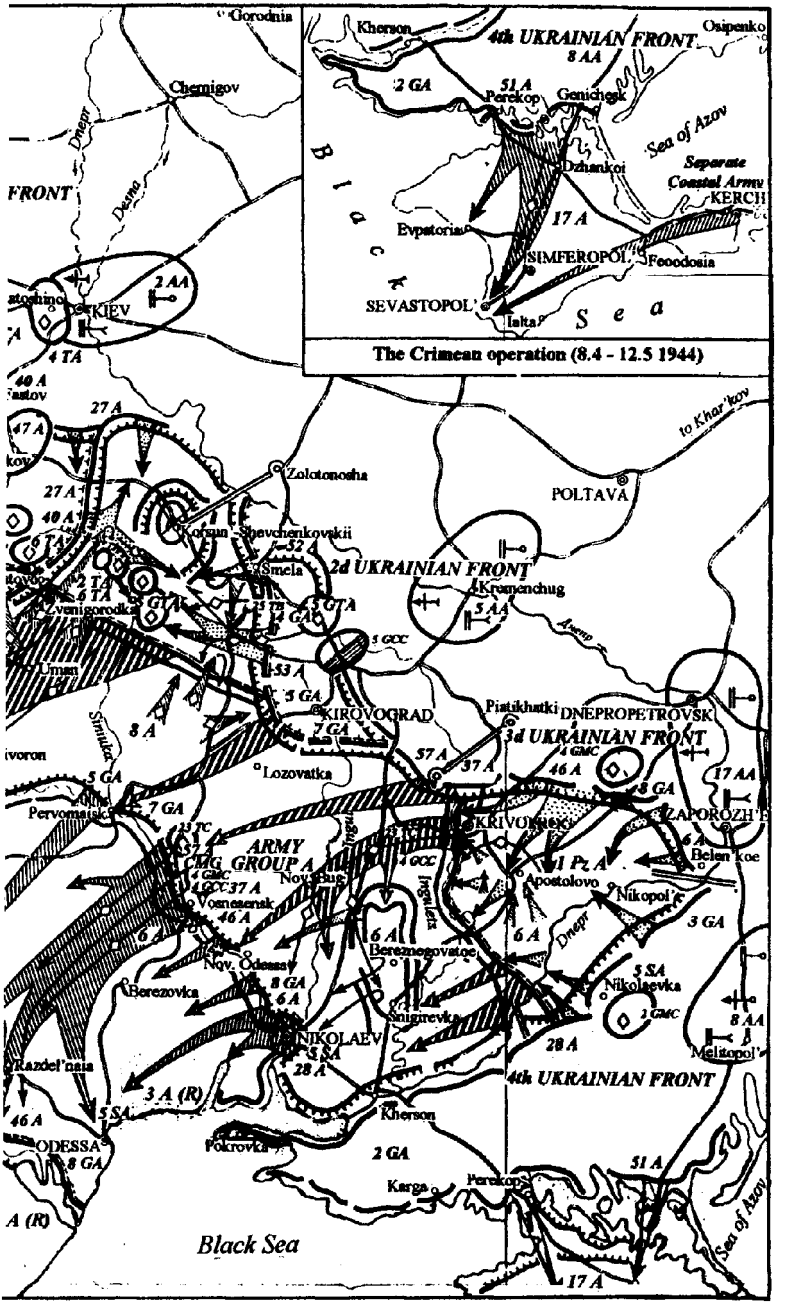
Map 15. Winter Campaign, December 1943-April 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



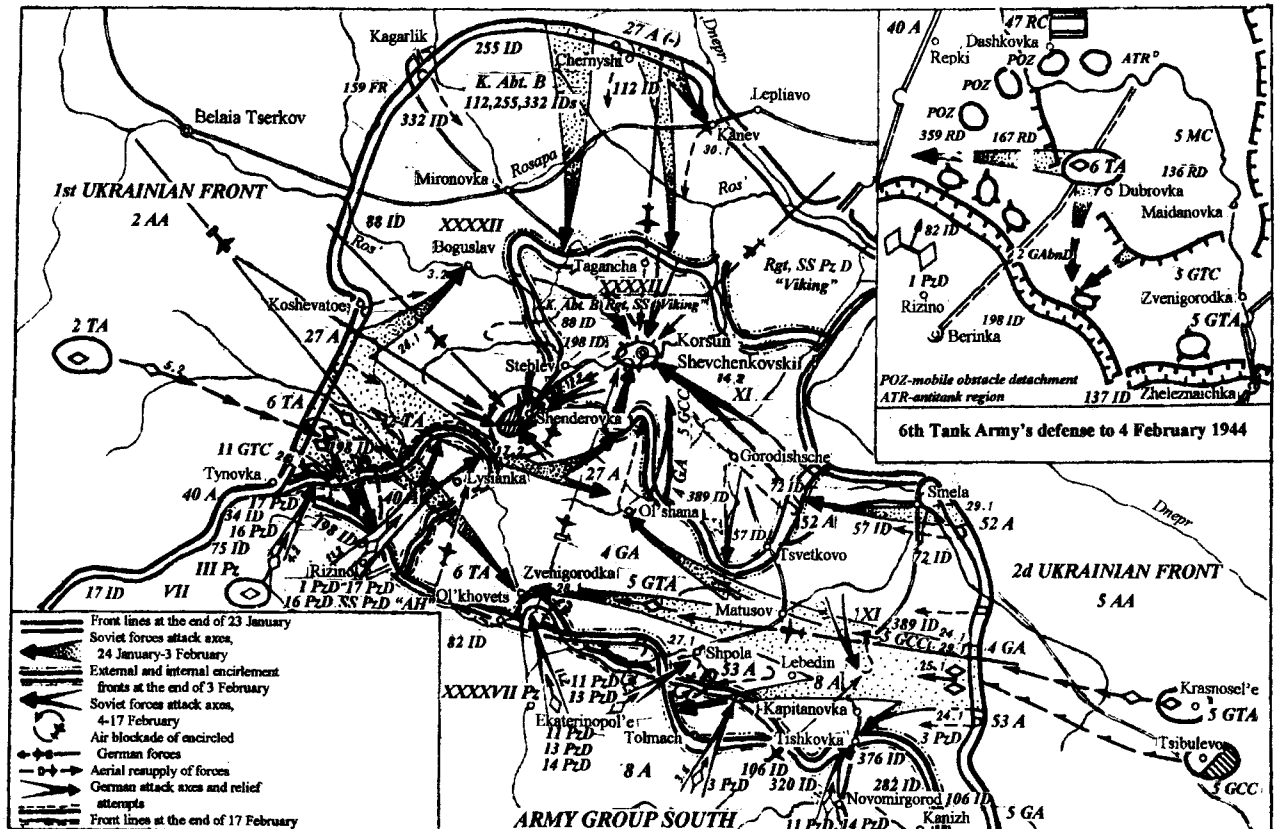
Map 16. Operations on the Right Bank of the Ukraine (25 December 1943–15 April 1944)

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



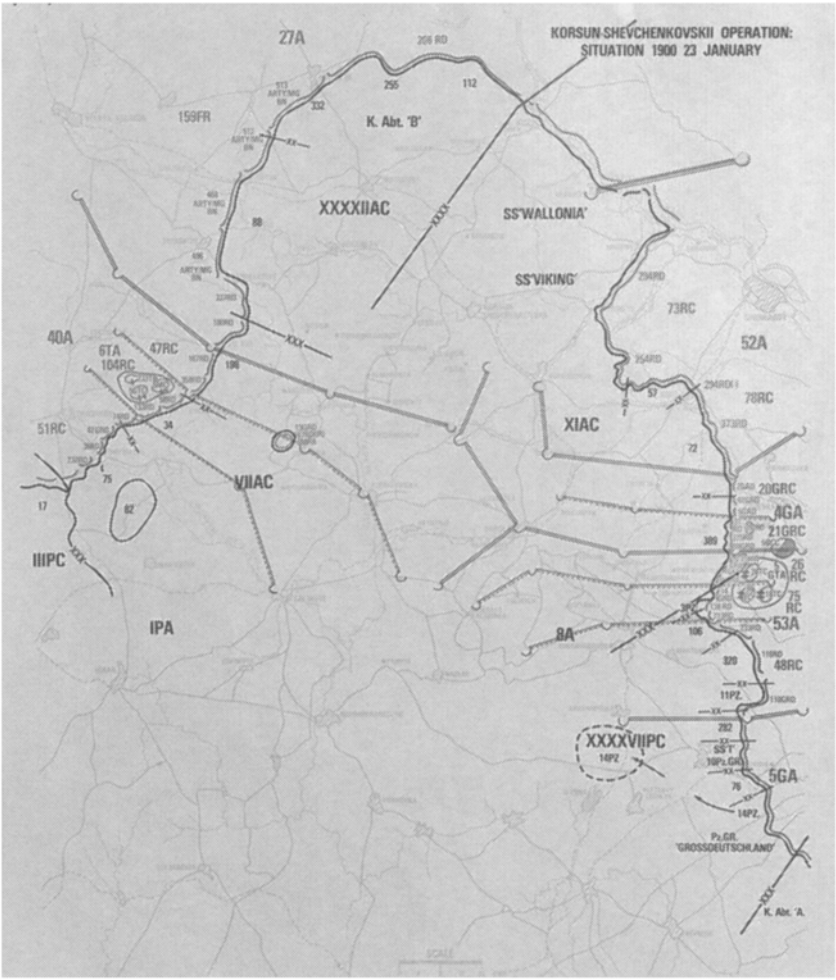
The Crimean operation (8.4 - 12.5 1944)

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



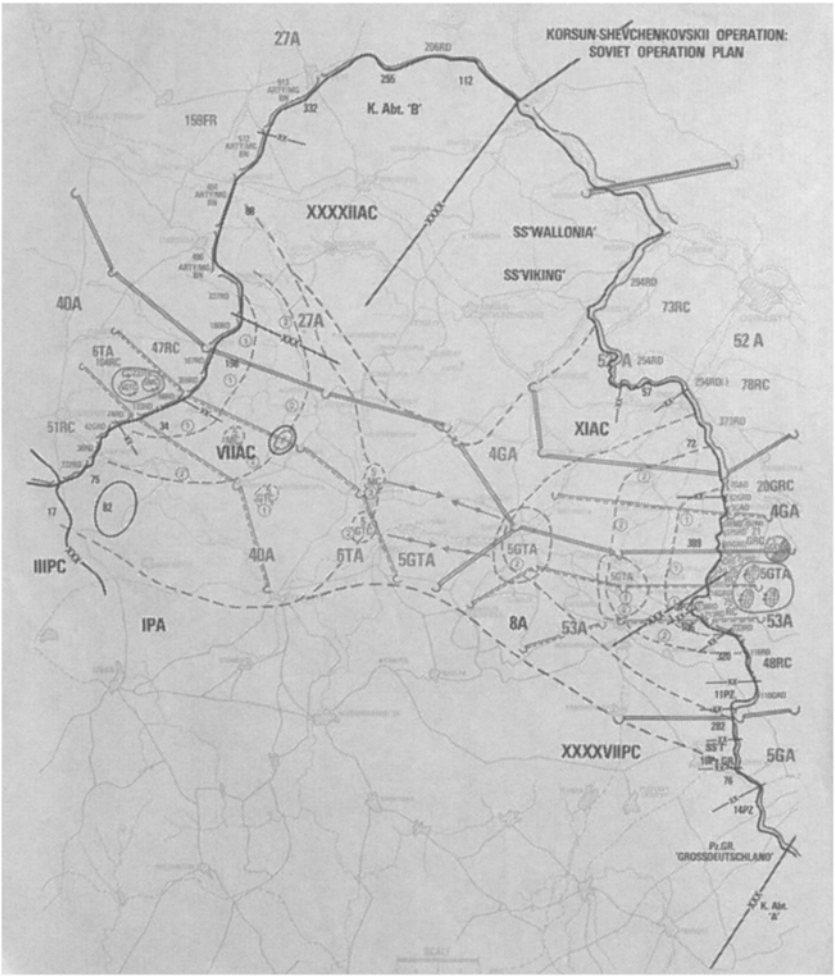
Map 17. The Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation (24 January–17 February 1944)

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



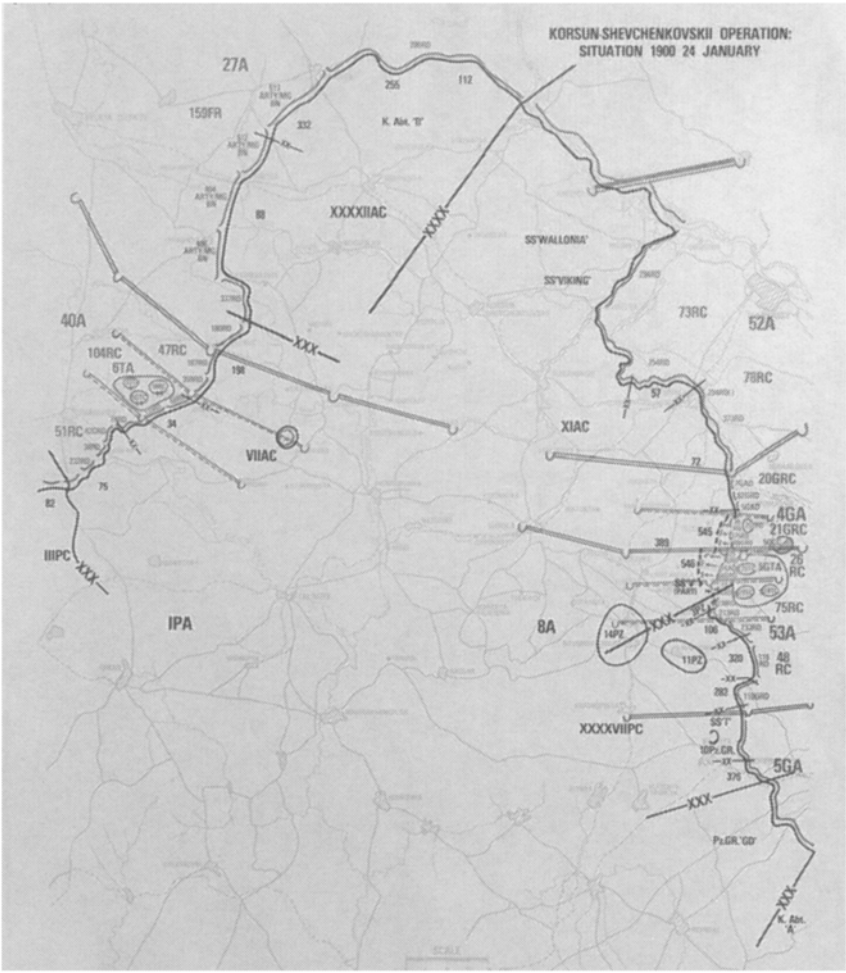
Map 18. Initial force dispositions on 23 January 1944

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



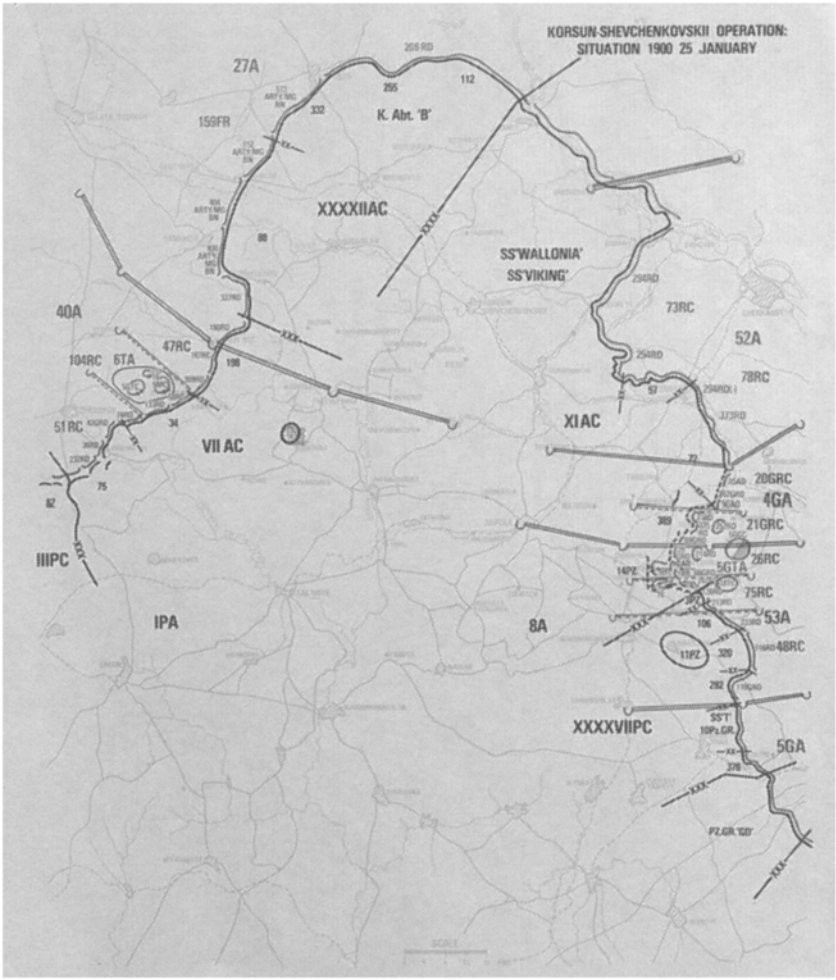
Map 19. Soviet operational plan for the Korsun'-Shevchenkovskii operation

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



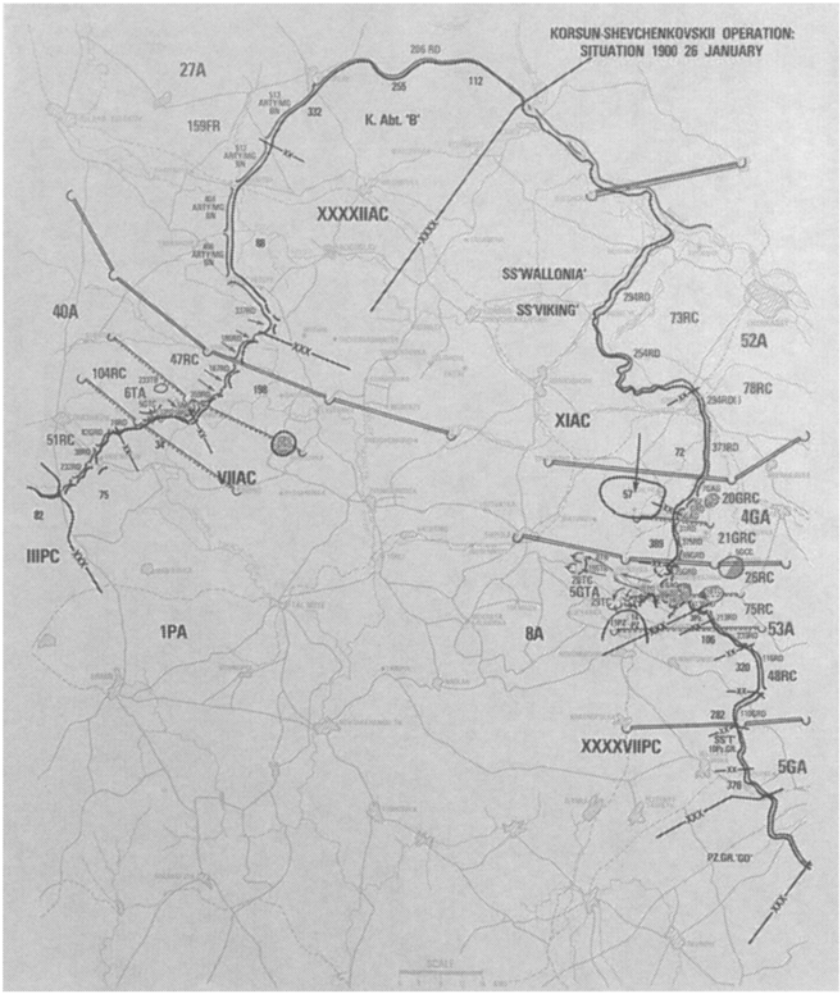
Map 20. Situation at 1900 hours, 24 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



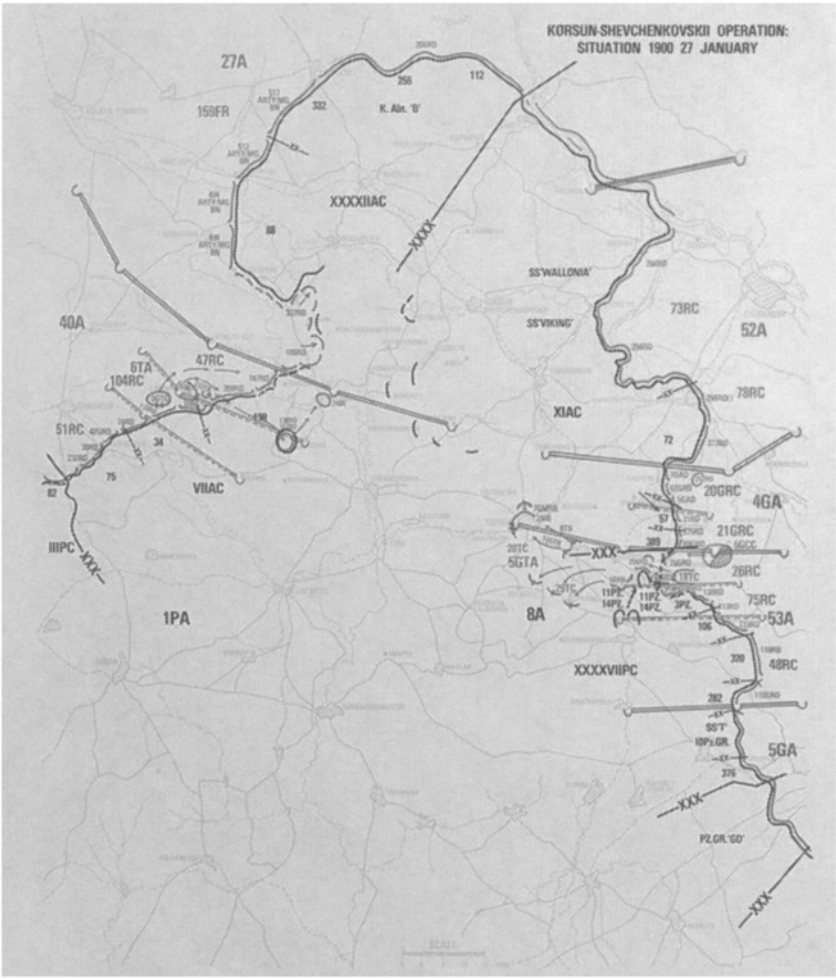
Map 21. Situation at 1900 hours, 25 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



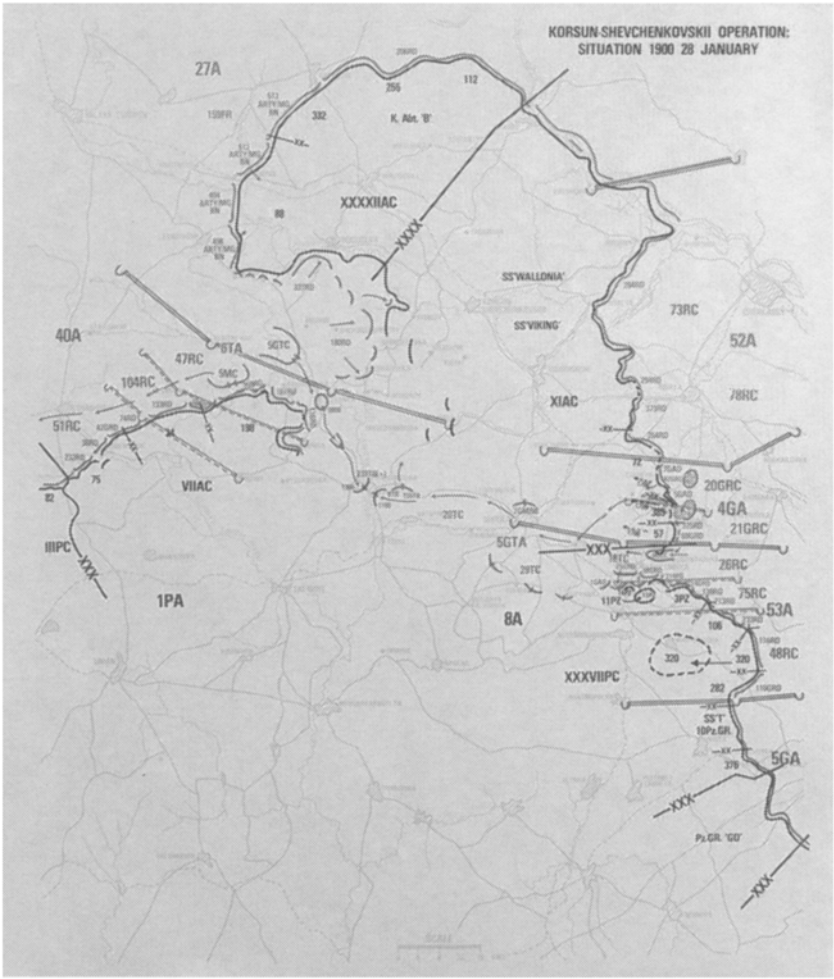
Map 22. Situation at 1900 hours, 26 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



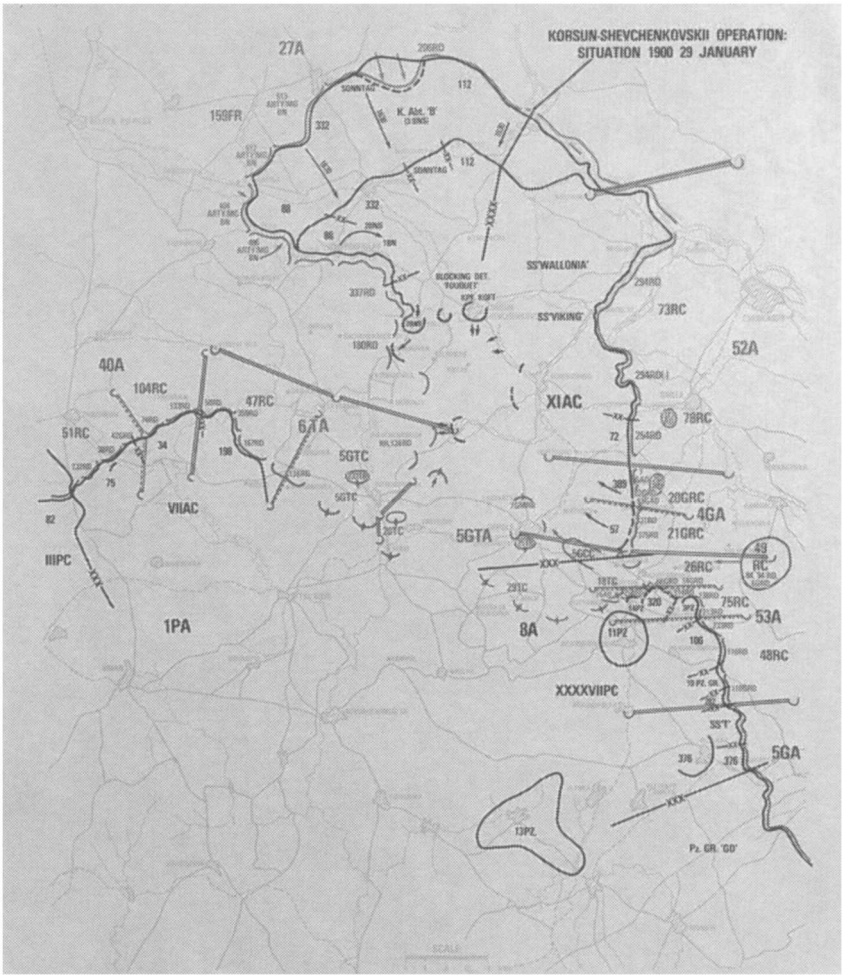
Map 23. Situation at 1900 hours, 27 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



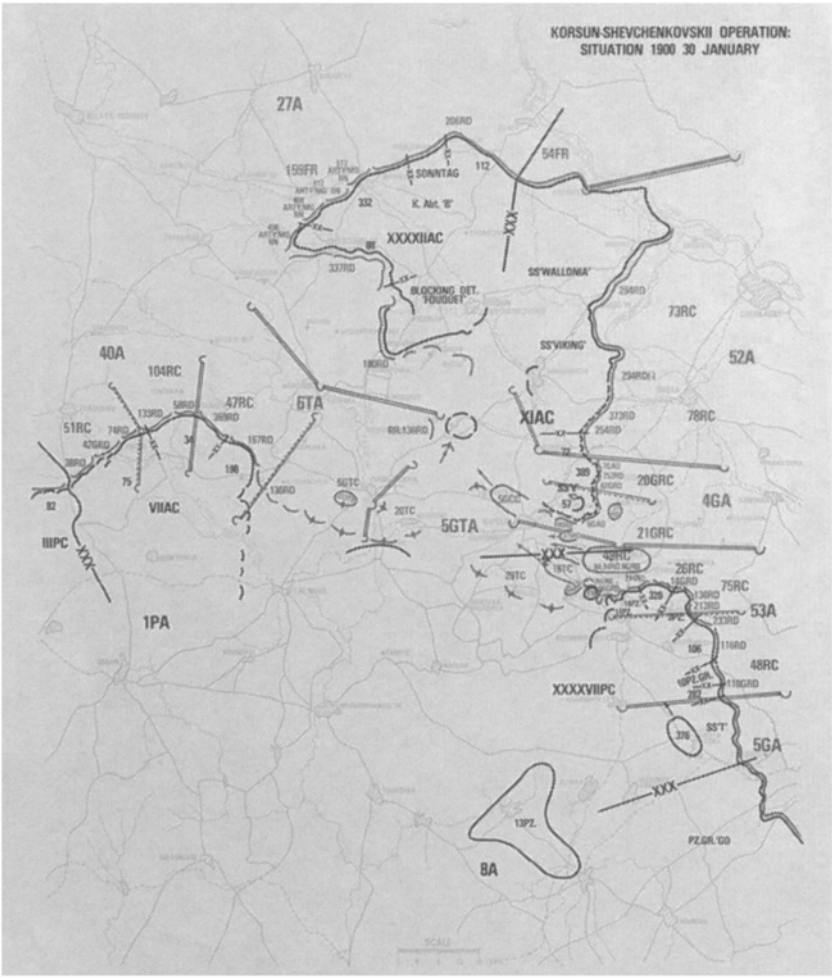
Map 24. Situation at 1900 hours, 28 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



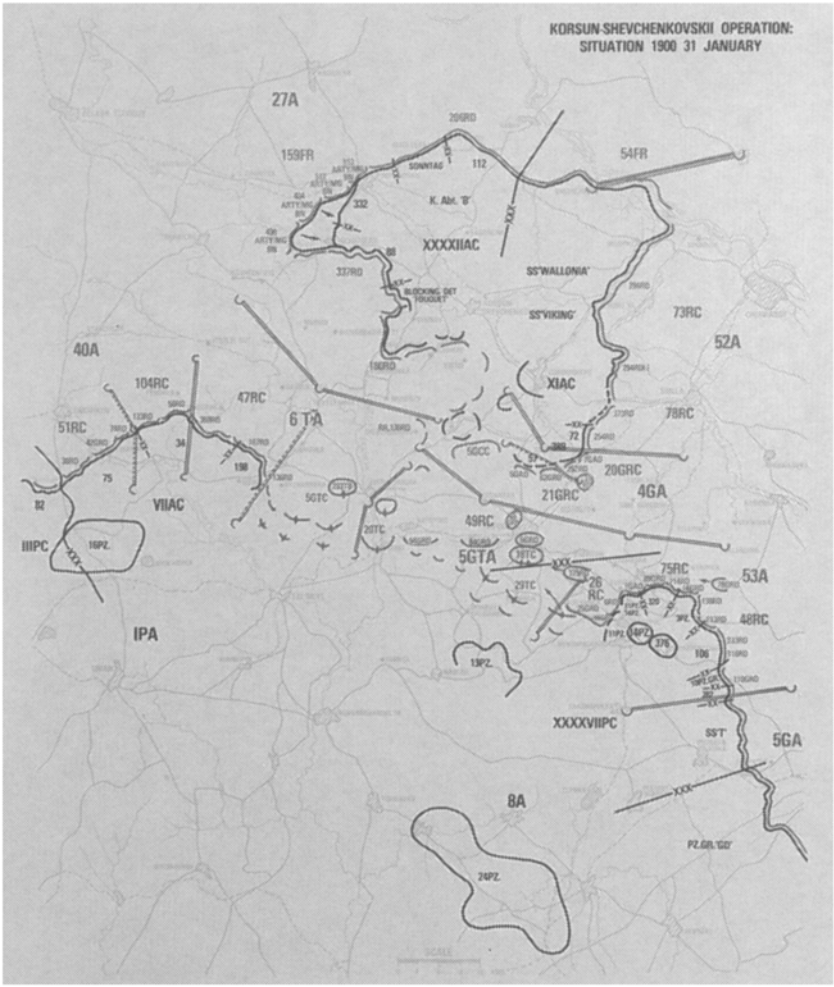
Map 25. Situation at 1900 hours, 29 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



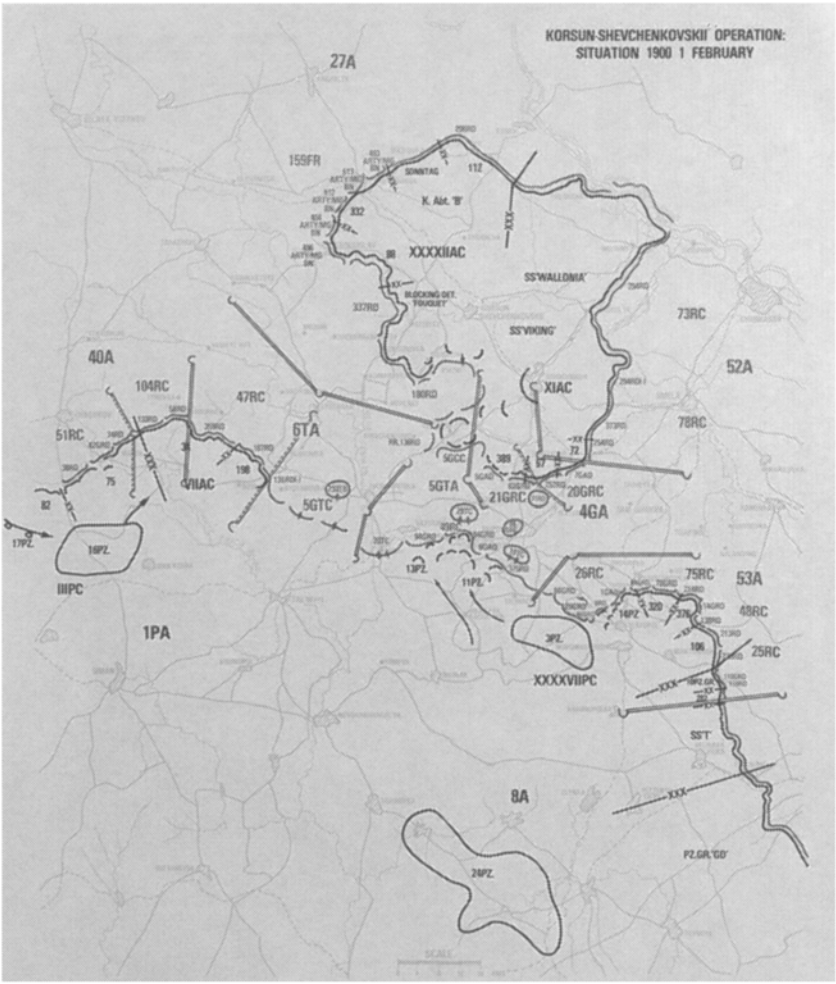
Map 26. Situation at 1900 hours, 30 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



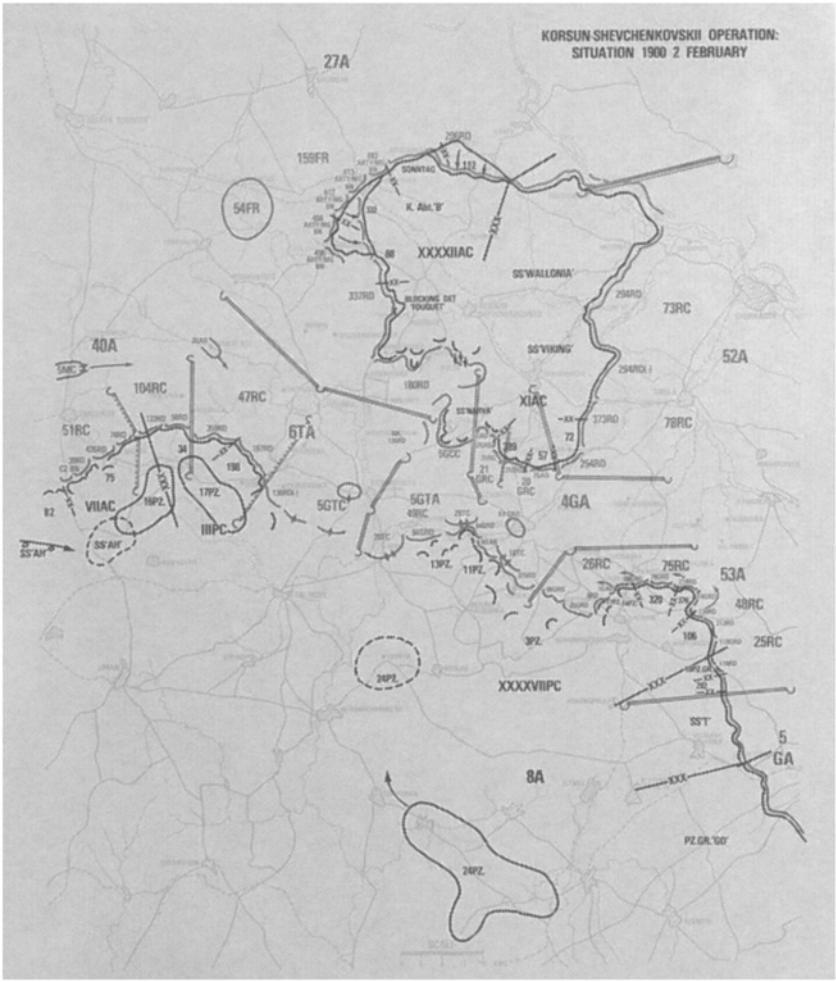
Map 27. Situation at 1900 hours, 31 January

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



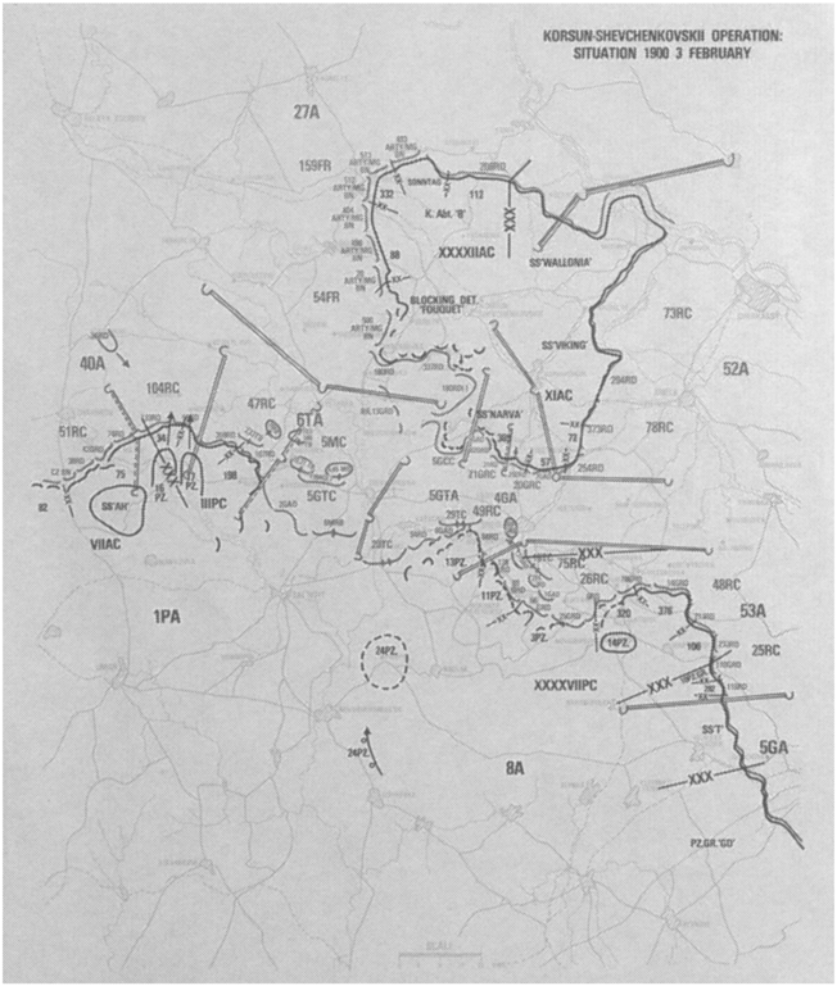
Map 28. Situation at 1900 hours, 1 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



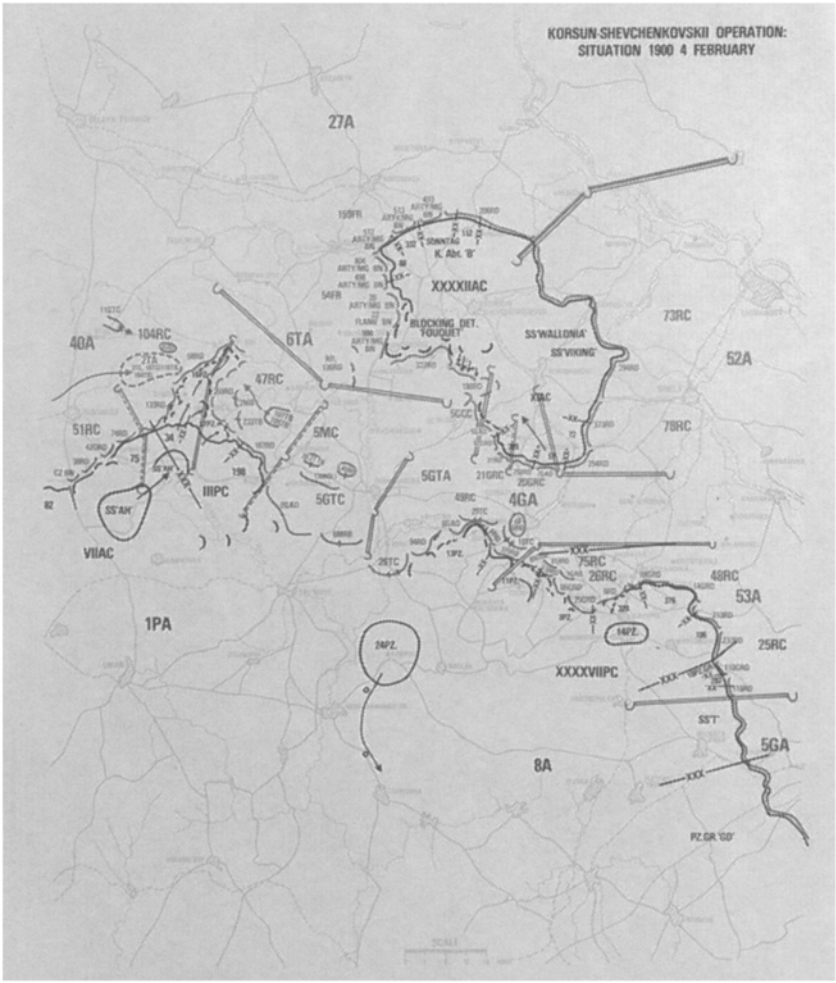
Map 29. Situation at 1900 hours, 2 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



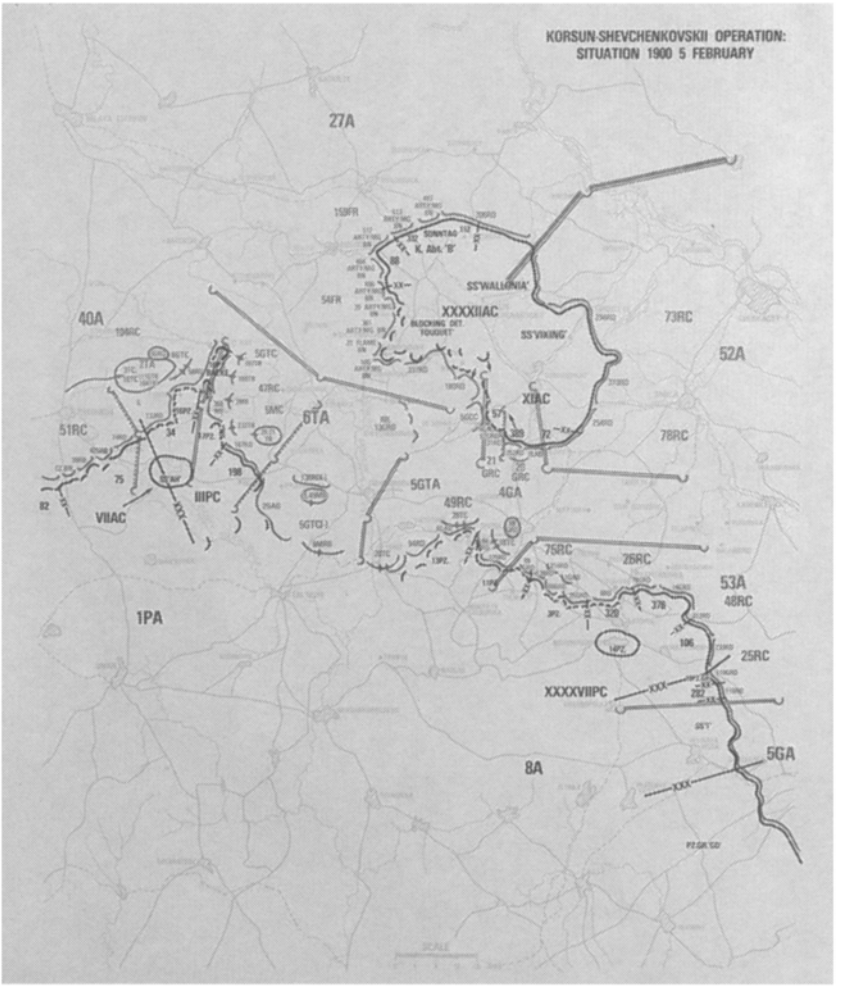
Map 30. Situation at 1900 hours, 3 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



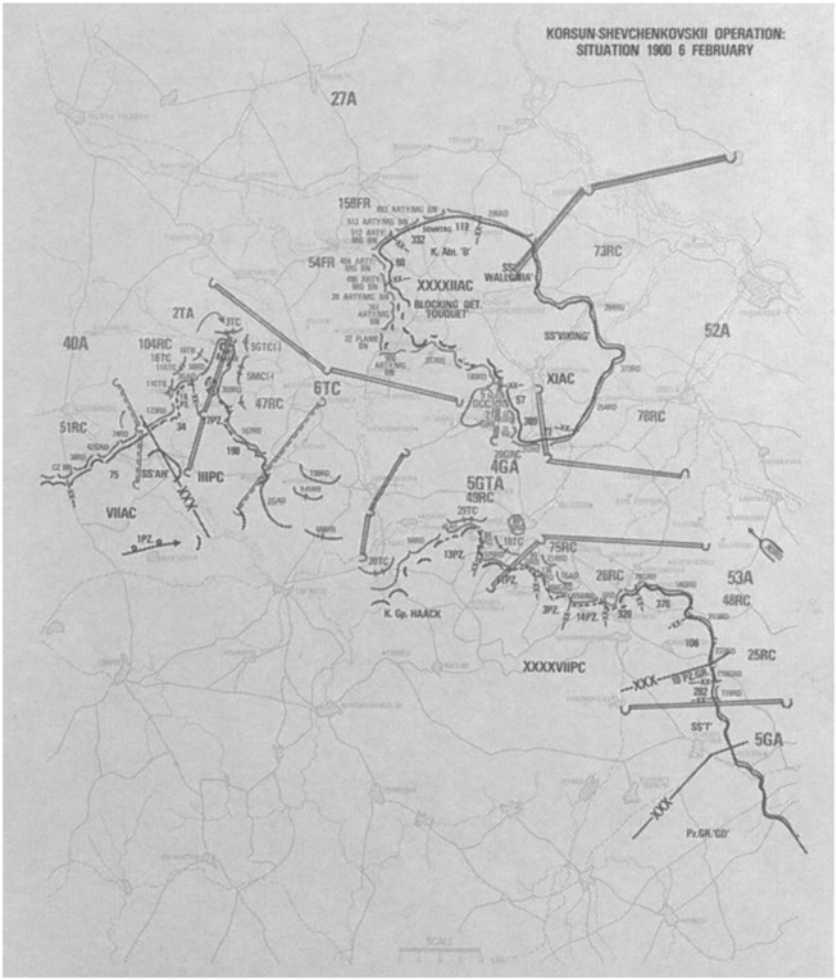
Map 31. Situation at 1900 hours, 4 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



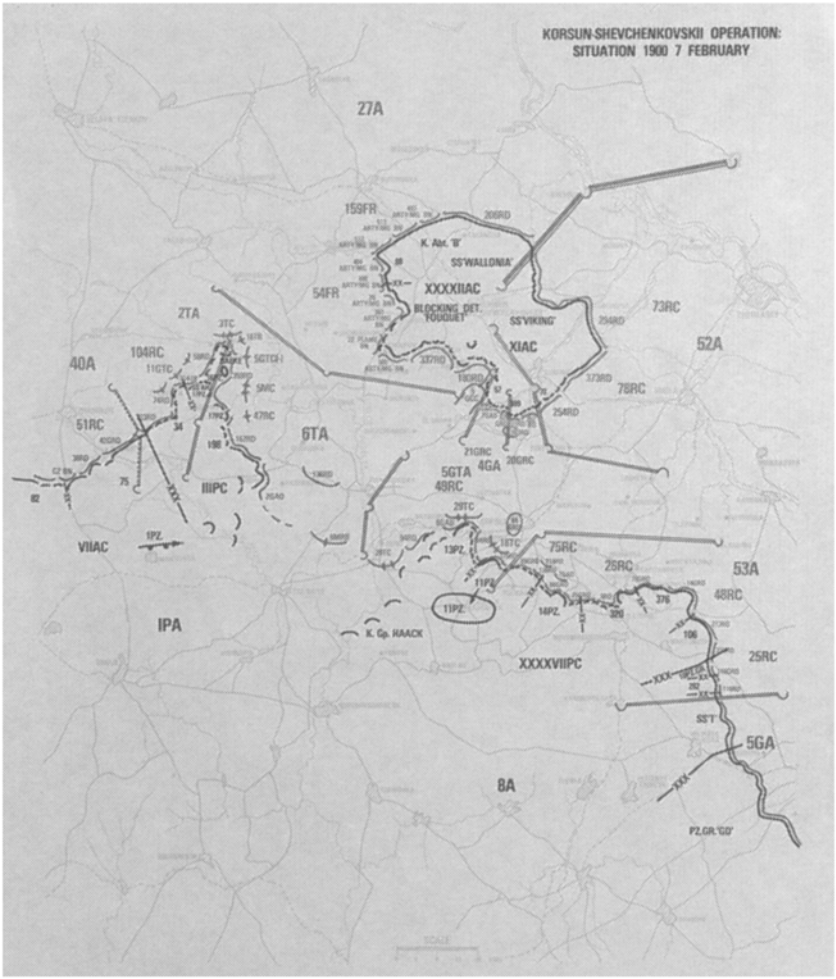
Map 32. Situation at 1900 hours, 5 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



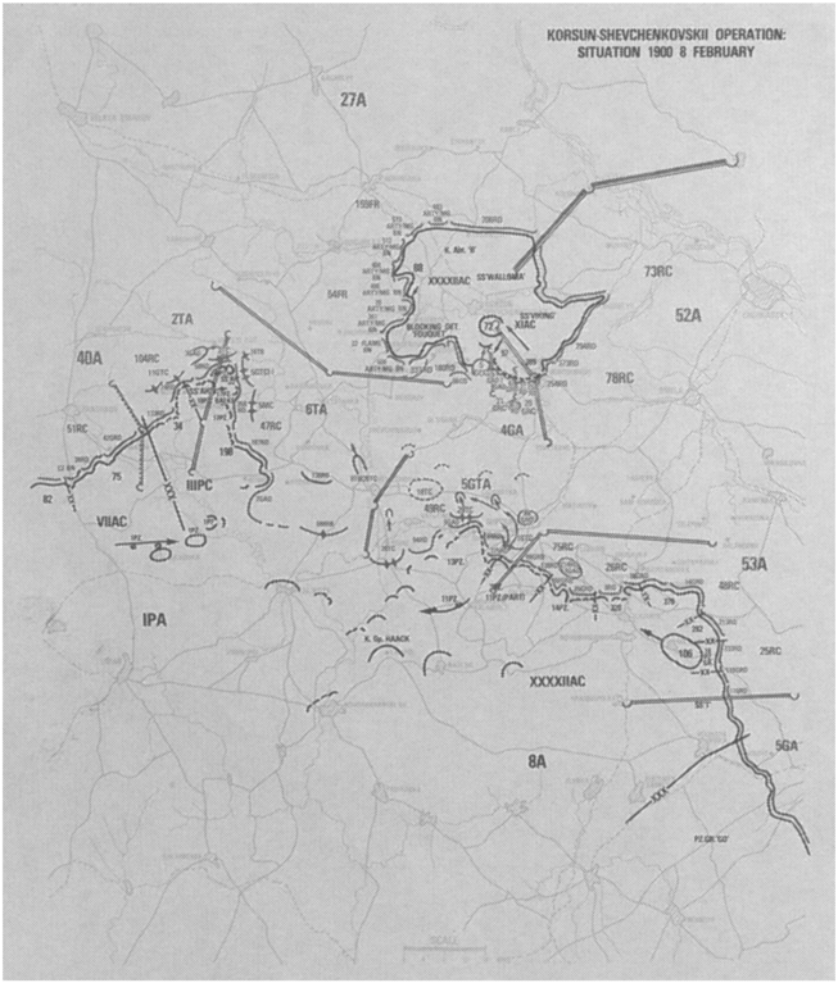
Map 33. Situation at 1900 hours, 6 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



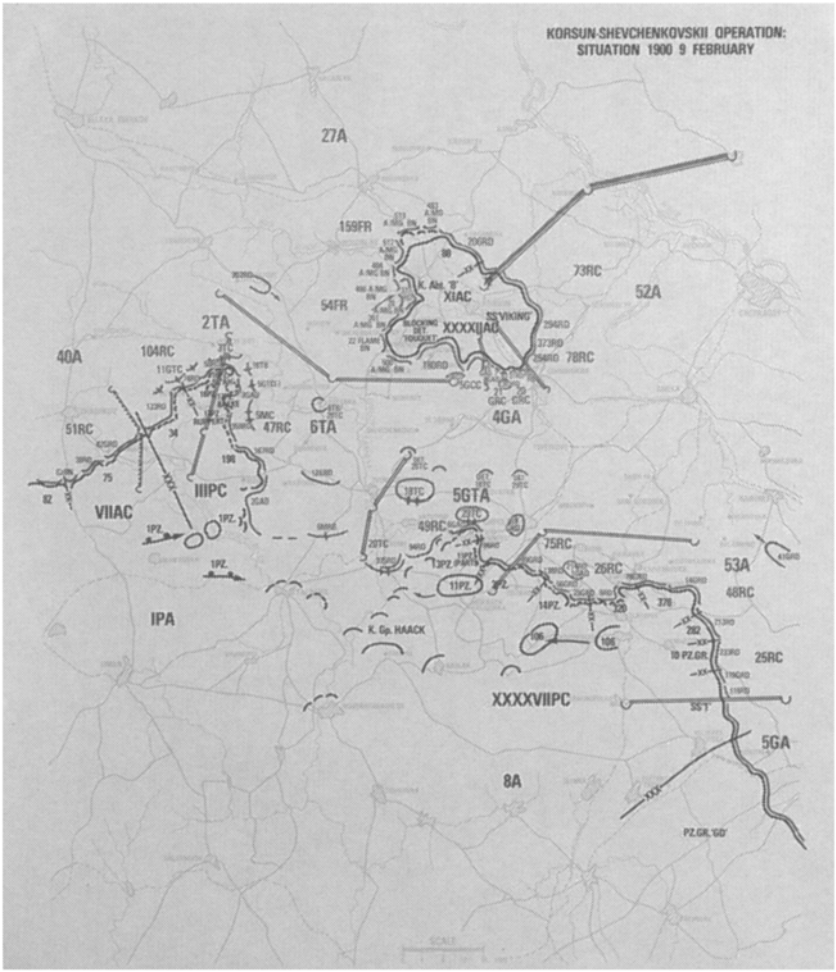
Map 34. Situation at 1900 hours, 7 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



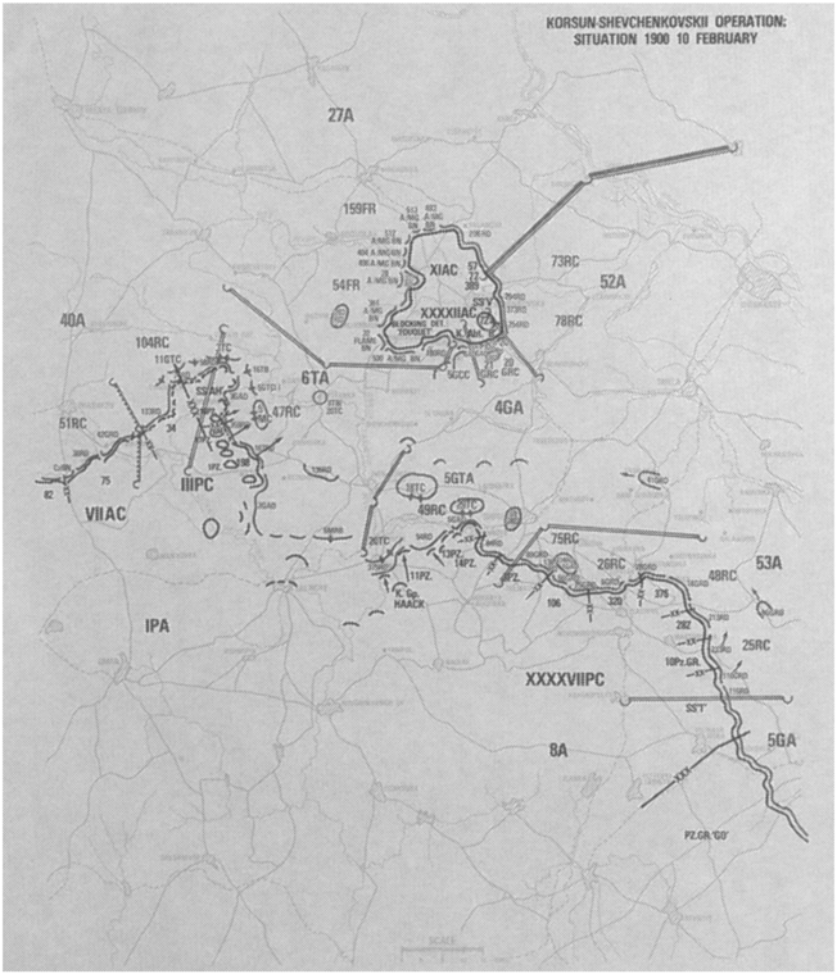
Map 35. Situation at 1900 hours, 8 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



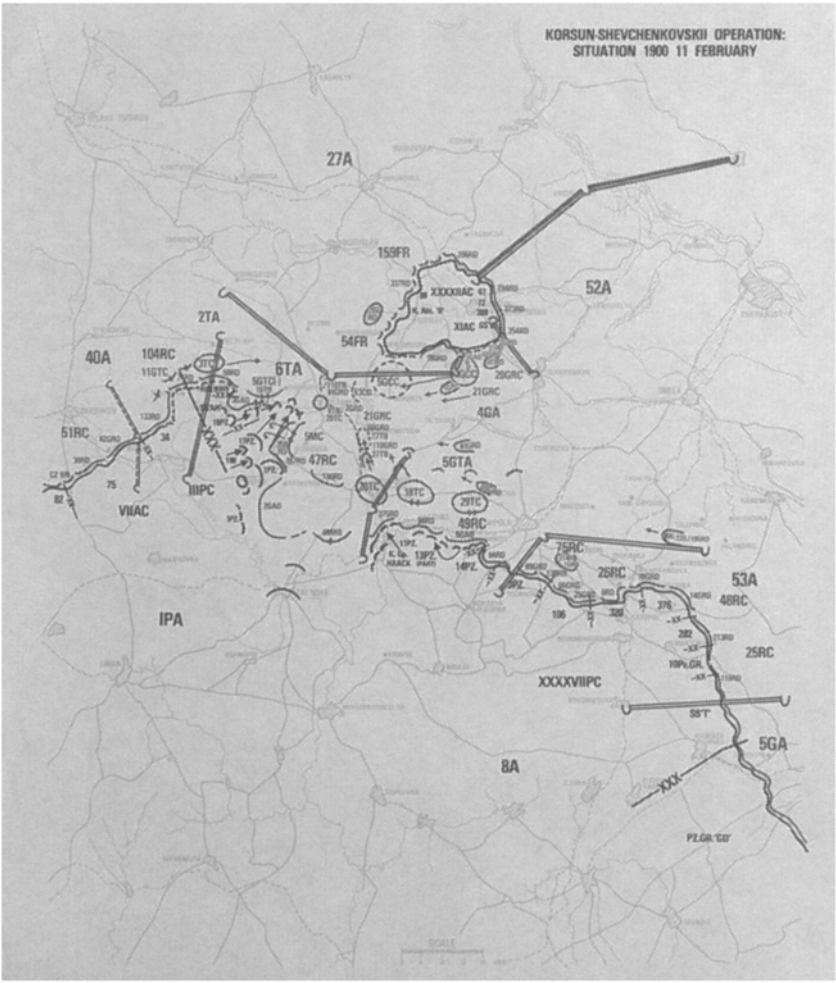
Map 36. Situation at 1900 hours, 9 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



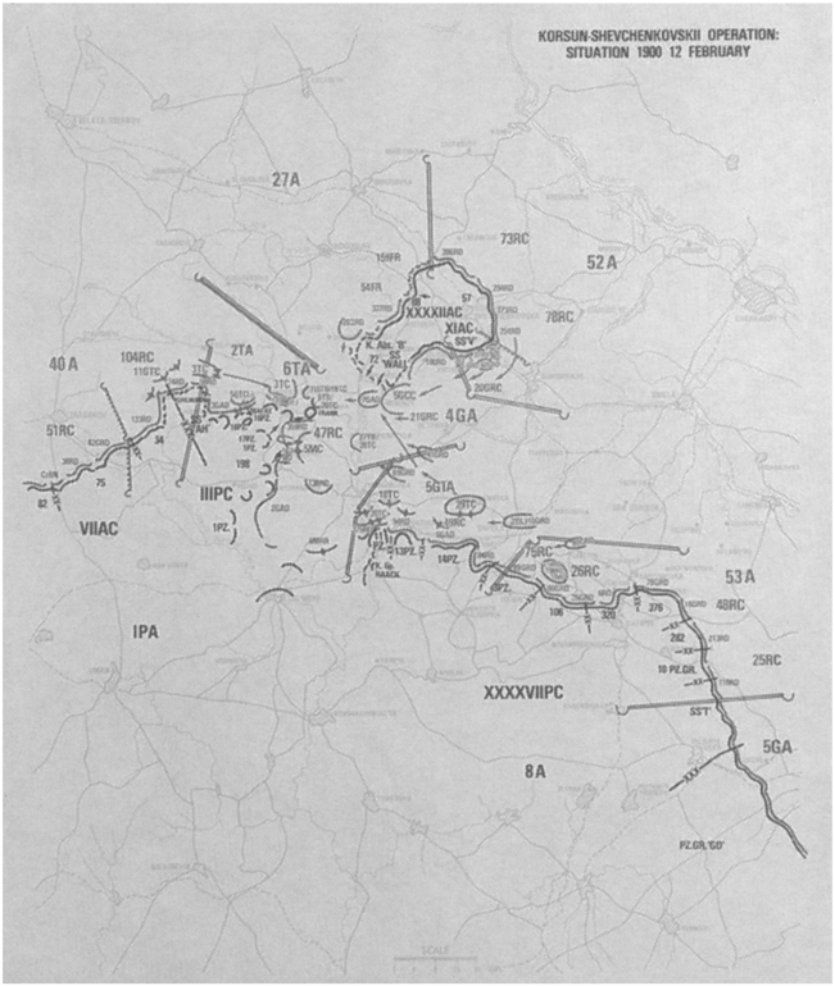
Map 37. Situation at 1900 hours, 10 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



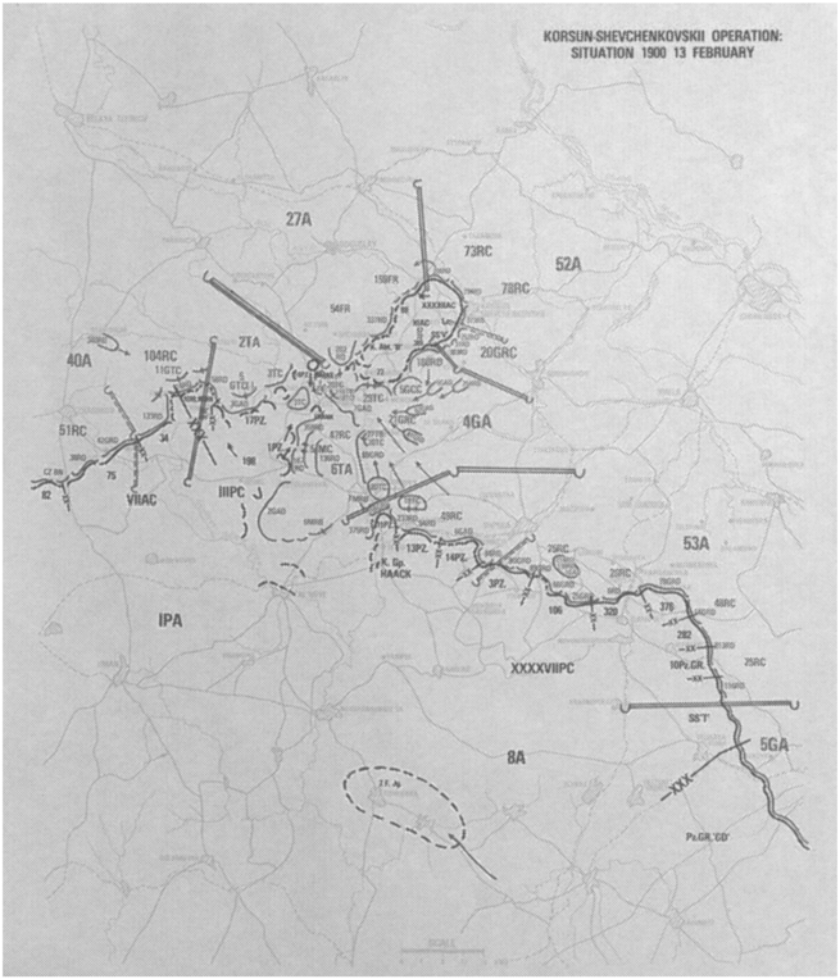
Map 38. Situation at 1900 hours, 11 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



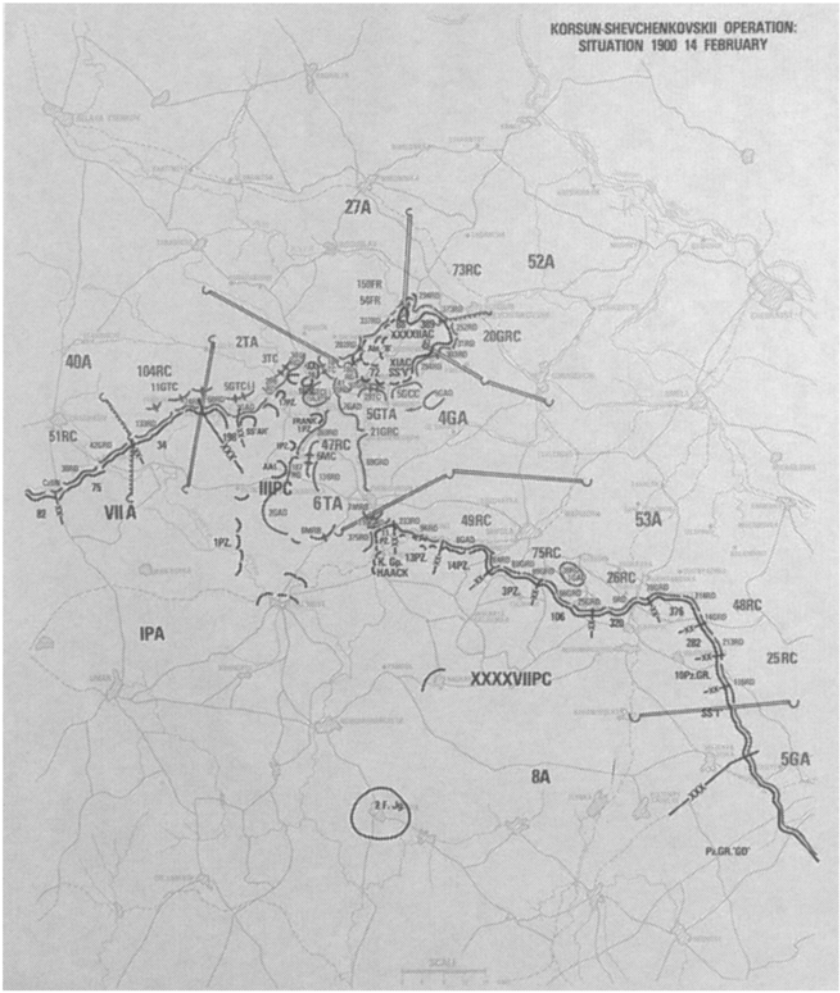
Map 39. The situation at 1900 hours, 12 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



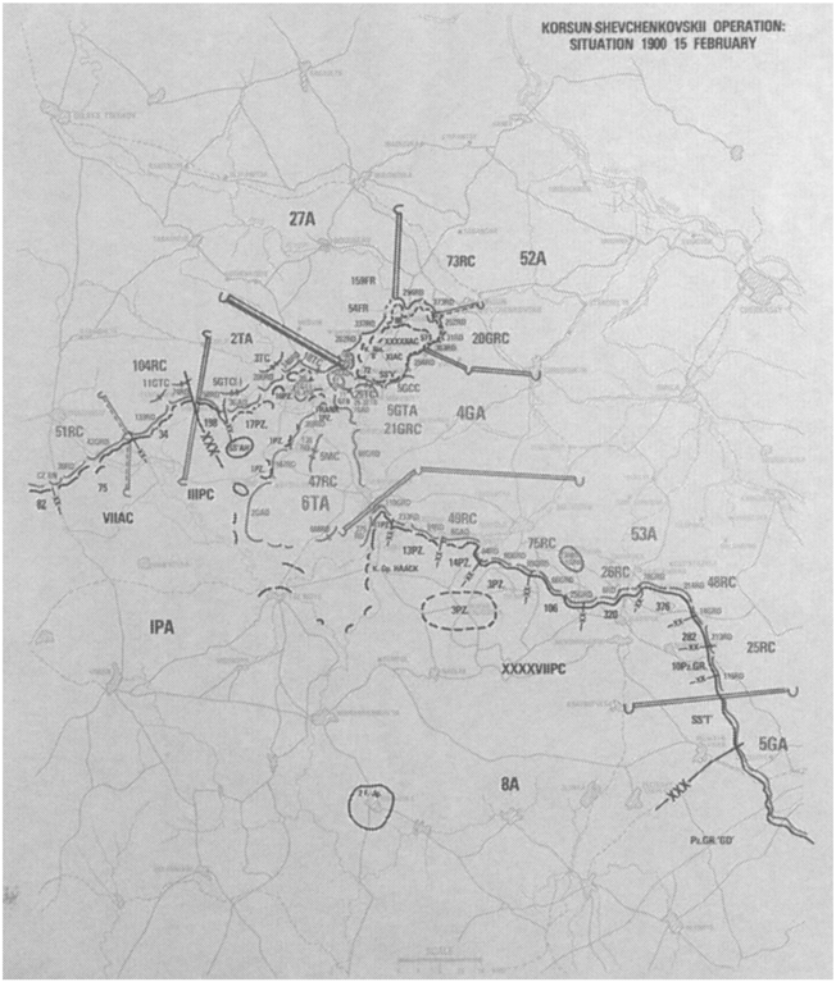
Map 40. Situation at 1900 hours, 13 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



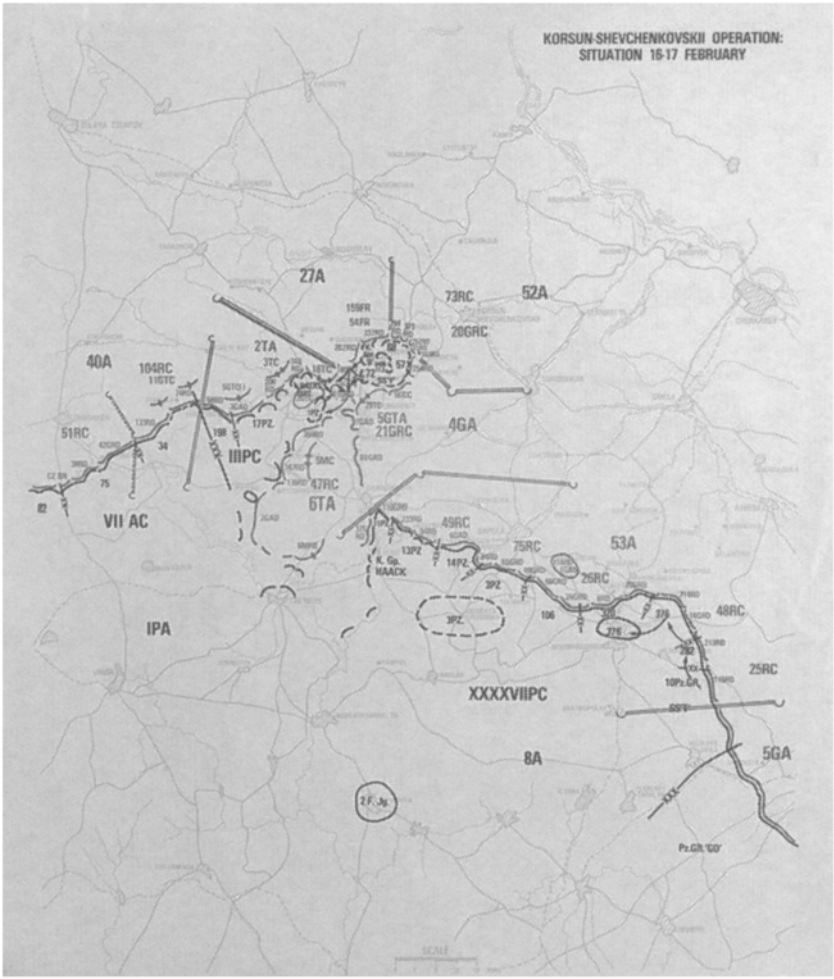
Map 41. Situation at 1900 hours, 14 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



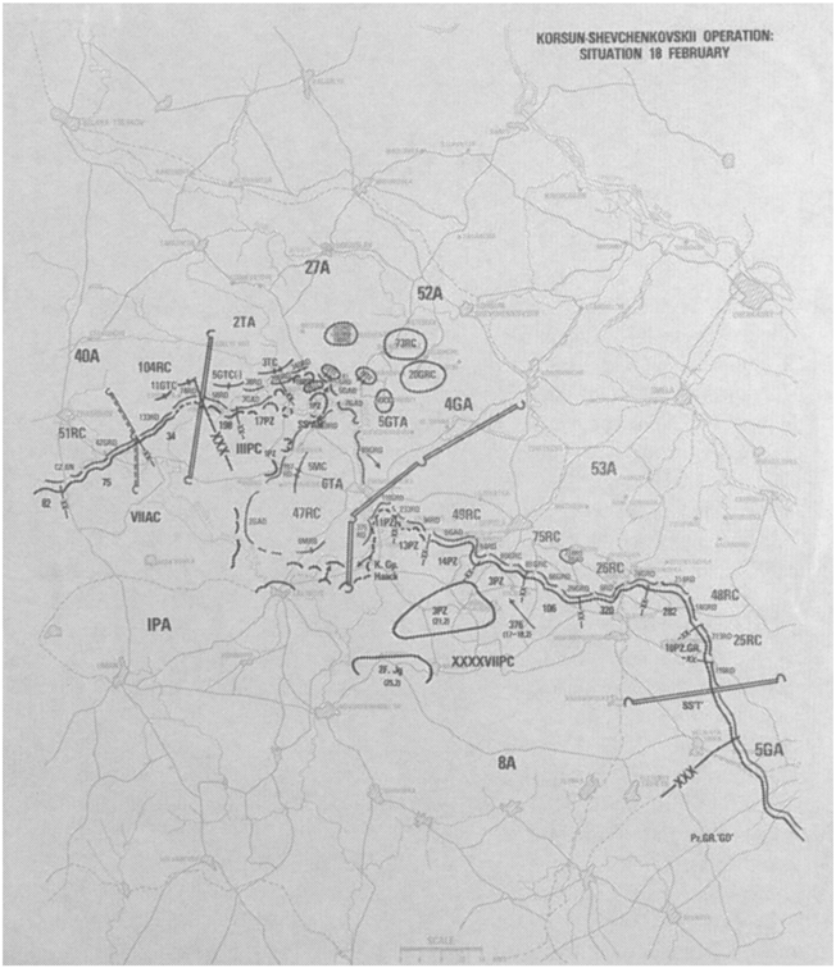
Map 42. Situation at 1900 hours, 15 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 43. Situation, 16–17 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein



Map 44. Situation at 1900 hours, 18 February

Copyright © 2003 David M.Glantz and Harold S.Orenstein